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LELAND·STANFORD·JVNIOR·VNIVERSITY

Writings of George Washington

Edited with an Introduction and Notes

By

Lawrence B. Evans, Ph.D.
Professor of History in Tufts College

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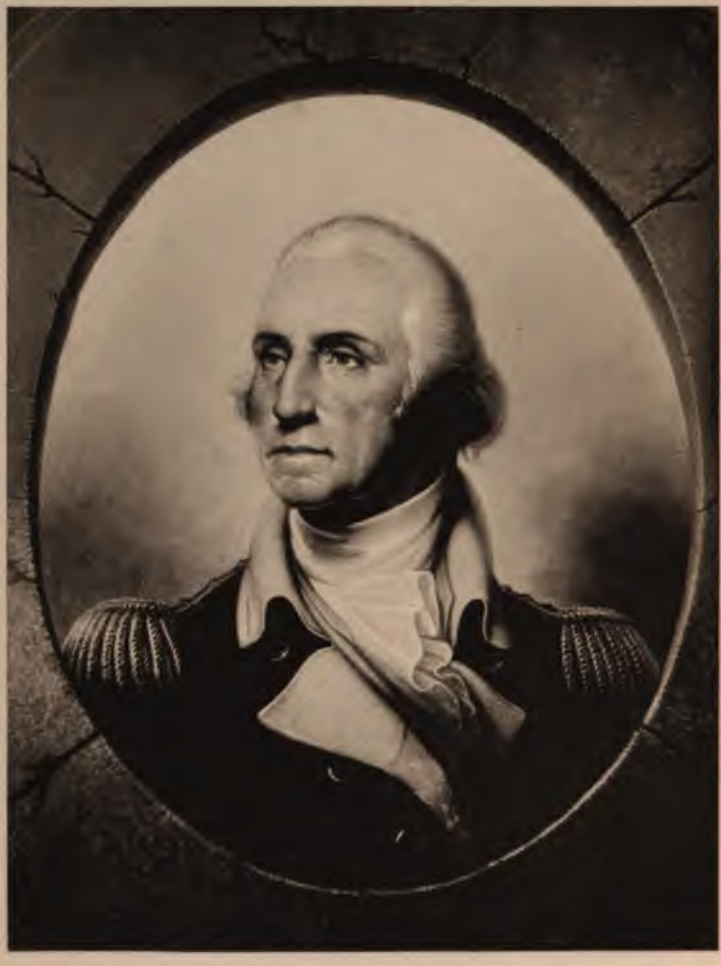
Edited by LAWRENCE B. EVANS, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN TUFTS COLLEGE

Washington



George Washington

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To
His Excellency
Curtis Guild, Jr.
Governor of Massachusetts

To

His Excellency

Curtis Guild, Jr.

Governor of Massachusetts

Preface

THIS is the first volume of the new series, *Writings of American Statesmen,* the purpose of which is to present in convenient form the most important writings of our most important statesmen. Subject to the limitations of space fixed by the publishers, the editor designs to bring into the several volumes all the writings of the statesmen represented which fall into the following categories:

1. Those documents which of themselves are important state papers, as Washington's Farewell Address, Hamilton's Report on the Public Credit, Franklin's Plan for a Union of the Colonies, and Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence.

2. Accounts of important events in which the writer was a leading participant, as Washington's description of his capture of Boston, Jefferson's account of the purchase of Louisiana, and Franklin's story of the conclusion of peace with Great Britain.

3. Papers setting forth the opinions of the writers on important public questions, as Washington's letters on the settlement of the West, the

papers of Hamilton and Jefferson concerning the interpretation of the Constitution, and Franklin's view of the questions at issue in the Revolution.

Of the writings of Washington, two editions of considerable extent exist, neither of which, however, is definitive. The first was published some seventy years ago under the editorship of Jared Sparks, and unfortunately this is the form in which Washington's papers are most familiar to the public. President Sparks's editorial methods are well known. Before publishing Washington's papers, he undertook to revise them. He omitted passages of which he did not approve, but did not warn his readers that the document as he presented it was incomplete. He altered words and phrases, and in some cases he even altered the sense. In his notes, however, he rendered great service by giving to the public the fruits of his wide learning.

The other edition began to appear about twenty years ago under the editorship of Worthington C. Ford. In this edition, the editor, in accordance with the accepted canons of historical scholarship, undertook to reproduce the texts exactly as they left the hands of their author. He incorporated in his work many of Sparks's notes, and printed a considerable number of Washington's papers which had never before been published.

The texts in this volume are taken, with a few exceptions, from Ford's edition. A few notes by Ford and a considerable number by Sparks are also included. The unsigned notes are by the present editor.

In order to avoid confusion, it should be stated that the references in this volume to *The Works of Hamilton* are to Senator Lodge's *first* edition.

I would not close this preface without expressing my appreciation of the helpful criticism which I have received from the publishers and from my colleague and friend, Professor David L. Maulsby.

LAWRENCE B. EVANS.

TUFTS COLLEGE, October, 1908.

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THE FAREWELL ADDRESS

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Introduction

THOMAS JEFFERSON, who was not disposed to be any more favorable in his judgment of Washington than the facts compelled him to be, says of him:

"His was the singular destiny and merit, of leading the armies of his country successfully through an arduous war, for the establishment of its independence; of conducting its councils through the birth of a government, new in its forms and principles, until it had settled down into a quiet and orderly train; and of scrupulously obeying the laws through the whole of his career, civil and military, of which the history of the world furnishes no other example."

The circumstances of Washington's life were peculiarly happy, and his career singularly well-rounded and complete. Endowed by birth with influential social connections, placed early in life in affluent circumstances, his military services in the French and Indian War made him the most prominent American soldier of his day. When the colonists took up arms against Great Britain, his appointment as commander-in-chief of the American forces on both military and political

grounds was alike natural and inevitable. While he possessed a large measure of the public confidence at the beginning of the Revolution, the qualities which he displayed in the conduct of that struggle placed him among the great men of the world, and gave him a degree of influence with his countrymen that no other American has ever possessed. His experiences in the Revolution made him realize most keenly the necessity of a firmer union than was furnished by the Articles of Confederation, and long before independence was assured, he sought to imbue others with his ambition for the establishment of a national government which should be strong enough to maintain its authority, meet its obligations, and uphold the national dignity and honor. In the last days of the Confederation, when the bonds of union were slowly dissolving and something very like anarchy seemed inevitable, it was the weight of Washington's name, more than any other one factor, which led to the formation and adoption of the Constitution. And when the new government was ready to be put into operation, the election of Washington to the presidency was as natural as had been his appointment to the command of the army fourteen years before; while in the starting of the new government, his personal influence was as large a factor in its success as that influence had been in securing its adoption. It may be questioned whether any other American of his day could have overcome the bitter opposition which was offered to his policy of

neutrality in the war between England and France, to his treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and to his enforcement of the excise law in Western Pennsylvania. If it had been necessary to wage the war for independence without his military genius and unstinted devotion; if his influence had been lacking in the effort of the few to establish an adequate government for the union; or if he had not stood sponsor for the great measures which gave stability to the new government and a place of honor and dignity to the nation, it is difficult to believe that any one of these movements could have been brought to a successful conclusion. No other leader of modern times has conducted a people through such momentous changes, or placed his work on so permanent a foundation as did Washington. And he had the almost unique good fortune of living to witness the triumph of every great cause which he had advocated, while in the closing years of his life, removed from the animosities which every public career seems to entail, he received the veneration of the civilized world.

Few public men have left so complete a record of their lives as has Washington. He began at an early period to keep copies of the letters which he wrote and to preserve all important papers which came into his hands. Every phase of his public life is amply recorded, not indeed with any purpose of leaving a record, but merely because the circumstances of his career were such that the transaction of the business of the day was in

itself a record. After the outbreak of the Revolution, however, Washington had a proper appreciation of the interest that his papers would have in the future, and he took ample precautions to see that they were preserved.

It was the attempt of Great Britain to tax the colonies which set Washington upon a career ending in his becoming one of the most important figures in history. But for those ill-advised measures, he might have lived and died a comparatively obscure colonial gentleman. He would have donned the King's uniform when there was need for it; he would probably have been elected with great regularity to the House of Burgesses of Virginia, and the time and energy not given to his public duties or to the cultivation of his plantations would no doubt have been given to some of those plans for the development of the country which occupied so much of his thoughts. But the enactment of the Stamp Act introduced him at once to a larger sphere, and from that time until his death his letters and other papers teem with comment and discussion occasioned by events of national and international importance.

No man in America was more thoroughly aroused than he by the British measures for the taxation of the colonies, and his letters vividly reflect the feelings which those measures engendered. Writing to his agents in London and to his Tory neighbor Bryan Fairfax, he states the grievances of America in no uncertain tones, and indicates some of the consequences which the British

policy would entail. He saw at once the bearing of the controversy on British commerce, and wrote to Francis Dandridge, in London, "The eyes of our people, already beginning to open, will perceive, that many luxuries, which we lavish our substance in Great Britain for, can well be dispensed with, whilst the necessaries of life are (mostly) to be had within ourselves." And four years later, when other plans of taxation had been resorted to, he again advocated measures for "starving their trade and manufactures"; and as the grievances of the colonies accumulated, his sense of injury and his determination to resist found indignant expression in letters to his loyalist friend and neighbor Bryan Fairfax. "The crisis is arrived," he wrote, "when we must assert our rights, or submit to every imposition, that can be heaped upon us, till custom and use shall make us as tame and abject slaves, as the blacks we rule over with such arbitrary sway." In the popular discussions of the time, he could not defend the rights of his countrymen with the eloquence of James Otis, or Samuel Adams, or Patrick Henry, but he made the most eloquent of all speeches when he said, "I will raise one thousand men, enlist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston."

There are many sources from which the story of the British attempt to tax America and the determination of the colonists to insist upon their rights can be learned, but for the history of the

Revolutionary War,—its objects, the gradual growth of the idea of independence, the obstacles raised by inefficient military organization, by the mutual jealousies of the States, and by the weakness of the national government, the uncertainty of the assistance of our nominal allies, the discovery of treason in the ranks, the lack of funds, the failure of supplies, the practical cessation of enlistments, and the growth of a discontent among the troops which finally resulted in mutiny,—for all this there is no source which in authenticity, in vividness, and in completeness is at all comparable with the letters and official papers of Washington. The circumstances under which he exercised his command and the questions with which he had to deal involved the preparation of papers which constitute a complete record of his connection with the war. For convenience the most important of them may be arranged in these groups,—letters to the President of Congress, appeals to the States, and letters to individuals.

The first of the letters to the President of Congress was written from New York the week after his appointment as commander-in-chief, and from that time until he resigned his commission, he was in frequent, sometimes daily, communication with that body. Reporting to it as to a superior authority, his letters are filled with accounts of the state of the army, defects in its organization, the difficulty of obtaining food and clothing, complaints caused by the failure of Congress to pay the troops, and by the depreciation in the value

of the continental currency, the gradual decline in enlistments, proposed movements of the troops, and important conflicts with the enemy. They are the most complete contemporary record that we possess of the conditions under which the Revolutionary War was carried on. The history of almost every phase of the military side of the contest could be written from these letters alone.

His representations to Congress of the needs of his troops did not produce the desired results. That body was at best but the shadow of a government, and, as was to have been expected, was often divided in opinion as to the proper measures to be adopted. To meet his necessities Washington began to appeal to the States. Sometimes he addressed the governors or provincial congresses singly. Sometimes he sent a circular letter to the States or to particular groups of them. As the Revolution proceeded, and the inability of Congress to meet the necessities of the army increased, appeals of this kind became more and more common. They are an illustration of the double task which rested upon Washington. He must not only train the armies and fight the battles of the Revolution, but more and more as the contest went on he was also obliged to provide the means for feeding and clothing and arming his men in order that they might remain in the field. The magnitude of his services to America in the Revolution cannot be exaggerated. The unintended testimony of his papers, as they were prepared from day to day in the transaction of the business of the moment,

is convincing evidence that without his unending patience, and his determined persistence, the war could not have been brought to a successful conclusion. It cannot be charged that the American republic has been lacking in appreciation of Washington. But on the other hand, it is certain that a perusal of his papers written while he was in command of the army, and particularly of those addressed to Congress and to the States, will show that there is ample justification for anything that may be said in praise of his services in the War for Independence. Washington *was* the Revolution. To him it appeared as a battle for human rights, and he made it appear in that light to others. He saw how the happiness of future generations was involved in it. Hence he refused to allow the indifference or negligence of some, or even the slanderous opposition and treason of others, to divert him from his course. Defeat did not dismay him. In reporting to Congress a disastrous repulse of his army, he could yet express the consolatory hope that on another occasion we might have better fortune. Without his inspiring example of unselfishness and devotion, it is doubtful if local jealousies could have been sufficiently subdued to bring the various colonial forces together into a continental army. Without him that army certainly could not have been kept in the field. And year by year as he led his ragged troops into winter quarters with very little in the way of victory over the enemy to encourage them, he urged upon Congress and the States to begin at

once the preparations for another campaign, apparently taking it for granted that no matter how often his men were defeated or his armies disabled by slaughter, sickness, or desertion, the war must nevertheless go on until it had achieved its object. And of all this, we have in Washington's papers a vivid and indisputable record. We may join with Moses Coit Tyler in saying that no one can "ever hope to know the mind and conscience of our Revolution, its motive, its conduct, its stern and patient purpose, or its cost, without studying Washington's letters."

In writing to Congress, Washington was necessarily placed under considerable restraint. Communications to that body were in the nature of public documents. They were read in Congress. They came to the knowledge of a considerable number of people. Many of them were given to the press. Hence their author was frequently obliged to write with reserve, in order that information damaging to the public interest might not be disclosed. To obviate this difficulty, a public letter to the President of Congress was frequently supplemented by a private one to the same official. Thus when Lafayette broached his plan for an invasion of Canada with a French army, Washington saw at once the dangerous possibilities involved in the introduction of a body of French troops among the French population of Canada. His letter to the President of Congress, however, is devoted altogether to the military aspects of the enterprise and gives no hint of the real reasons

for his opposition. These are found in a private letter sent three days later (see *post,* p. 123). In communications to the States, even greater care and restraint were necessary, for the officials of the States were less responsible for the promotion of the common cause than was the Congress.

This necessity for circumspection in what were virtually public letters gives added value to Washington's more intimate communications to friends in whom he had confidence. Here he felt it safe to write with greater frankness, and these letters exhibit a freedom of expression and an absence of restraint which make them of particular interest to every student of the Revolutionary War. Here are statements as to the condition of the army and its dangerous situation which would never have found their way into any public document. Here also he felt at liberty to give vent to personal feelings which he was usually careful to suppress in his more public communications.

Among his correspondents while he was with the army were five with whom his exchange of letters was frequent and the tone of his own particularly frank and unrestrained. The first of these was his favorite brother John Augustine Washington (1736-87), "the intimate companion of my youth and the friend of my ripened age." The correspondence with him during the early years of the war is especially valuable. It was to him that Washington wrote, March 31, 1776:

"I believe I may with great truth affirm, that no man

perhaps since the first institution of armies ever commanded one under more difficult circumstances, than I have done. . . . Many of my difficulties and distresses were of so peculiar a cast, that, in order to conceal them from the enemy, I was obliged to conceal them from my friends, and indeed from my own army, thereby subjecting my conduct to interpretations unfavorable to my character, especially by those at a distance, who could not in the smallest degree be acquainted with the springs that governed it."

And again the General wrote his brother (November 19, 1776):

"I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde motion of things, and I solemnly protest, that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds a year would not induce me to undergo what I do; and after all, perhaps, to lose my character, as it is impossible under such a variety of distressing circumstances, to conduct affairs agreeably to public expectation, or even to the expectation of those, who employ me, as they will not make proper allowances for the difficulties their own errors have occasioned."

Among his other correspondents during the war none enjoyed a larger share of his confidence than Joseph Reed, President of Pennsylvania. Washington welcomed his criticism, and offered to him his own sentiments without the slightest reserve. It was to Reed that he wrote (28 November, 1775):

"Such a dearth of public spirit, and want of virtue, such stock-jobbing, and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before,

and pray God I may never be witness to again. What will be the ultimate end of these manœuvres is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. . . . Could I have foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command. A regiment or any subordinate department would have been accompanied with ten times the satisfaction, and perhaps the honor."

And again, when depressed by circumstances which weighed upon him, it was to the same friend that he wrote:

"I know—but to declare it, unless to a friend, may be an argument of vanity—the integrity of my own heart. I know the unhappy predicament I stand in; I know that much is expected of me; I know, that without men, without arms, without ammunition, without anything fit for the accommodation of a soldier, little is to be done; and, which is mortifying, I know, that I cannot stand justified to the world without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause, by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them."

During a very interesting period of the war, Washington wrote frequently to Gouverneur Morris, who while in Congress opened a friendly correspondence with the General, in the course of which they exchanged views with great freedom. It was at this period that Morris so established himself in Washington's confidence as to lead to his selection in 1789 as the confidential agent to sound the government of Great Britain on the subject of a treaty of commerce.

But among all his friends, the two who stood closest to him, who possessed the greatest share of his confidence, and who enlisted his personal affection most deeply, were Lafayette and Hamilton. The youthful enthusiasm and chivalrous spirit with which the French boy entered the battle for American independence appealed to the sensibilities of Washington, and aroused in him an affection for Lafayette which was a mingling of the love of a father with the attachment of friend for friend. His letters to Lafayette, of which there are many, reveal one of the most attractive phases of his character. In their mingling of frank comment on the events of the day with friendly gossip on matters of interest to the two families, they strongly suggest the correspondence of William III. with Bentinck, Earl of Portland.

Hamilton also enjoyed the unlimited confidence of Washington. Like Lafayette, Hamilton was a mere boy when he entered the military service. Like Lafayette, he was at Washington's side in some of the most important battles of the Revolution, and again like Lafayette, Washington regarded him almost in the light of a son. He bore with his faults. He appreciated his great abilities. In 1781, he wrote of him:

"How far Colo. Hamilton, of whom you ask my opinion as a financier, has turned his thoughts to that particular study, I am unable to ansr., because I never entered upon a discussion of this point with him. But I can venture to advance, from a thorough knowledge of him, that there are few men to be found, of his

age, who has a more general knowledge than he possesses; and none, whose soul is more firmly engaged in the cause, or who exceeds him in probity and sterling virtue."

The public careers of Washington and Hamilton were passed side by side. They served together during a large part of the Revolution. They worked together in bringing about the formation and adoption of the Constitution. And when Washington was called to the Presidency, Hamilton was associated with him as his most trusted adviser. His letters to Hamilton are among the most valuable of his papers.

Washington's services during the Revolutionary War did not surpass in importance his services in bringing about the formation and adoption of the Constitution. Early in the war he saw that the national government was not endowed with adequate powers, and that the jealousy or inactivity of the States prevented an effective exercise of those that it had. He was in a better position than any one else, except possibly Robert Morris, to appreciate the defects of the government of the Confederation, for, as he wrote to Hamilton, "no man perhaps has felt the bad effects of it more sensibly; for to the defects thereof, and want of powers in Congress, may justly be ascribed the prolongation of the war, and consequently the expenses occasioned by it. More than half the perplexities I have experienced in the course of my command, and almost the whole of the difficulties and distress of the army, have their origin here."

He realized also the great danger that the weakness of the Confederation would result in the dissolution of the union. "I do not conceive," he wrote to Jay, "we can exist long as a nation without having lodged somewhere a power, which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State governments extends over the several States." Long before he resigned his command, but much more so after he retired to Mt. Vernon, all his letters, to quote his own words, "teem with these sentiments." Mt. Vernon became the centre of the agitation for the reform of the Confederation. In letters sent to Knox in Massachusetts, to Jay and Hamilton in New York, to McHenry in Maryland, to Mason and Madison, Henry and Jefferson in Virginia, he set forth the urgency of the need of a stronger government, and through these and other correspondents his opinions penetrated every part of the Union. As the history of the Revolutionary War can be traced largely in his papers, so also his correspondence is an invaluable source for all who would comprehend the movement which led up to the Convention of 1787. Much against his will, but moved by a "conviction that our affairs were fast verging toward ruin," he consented to serve as one of the representatives of Virginia in that body. And when the Constitution was formulated and submitted to the States, all his influence was used to obtain its adoption. A visitor at Mt. Vernon in October, 1787, wrote, "I never saw him so keen for any-

thing in my life as he is for the adoption of the new scheme of government." He regarded the contest for the ratification of the instrument as the last chance that America was likely to have to realize national greatness. "Without an alteration in our political creed," he wrote to Madison, "the superstructure we have been seven years in raising, at the expense of so much treasure and blood, must fall. We are fast verging to anarchy and confusion."

As soon as it became apparent that the new Constitution would be accepted by a sufficient number of States to insure its being put into operation, several of Washington's correspondents, especially Hamilton, began to suggest to him the probability of his being called to the Presidency. His letters for a period of several months reveal his disinclination to accept the office and his distrust of his ability to discharge its duties creditably. He urged his lack of experience in civil affairs, his ignorance of law, and his increasing years. But his interest in establishing a firm union of the States under a government of adequate powers was so great that he finally yielded to the appeals which came to him from every State, and entered upon the discharge of new tasks equal in importance to any that he had previously met. The work which he had begun as commander of the army in the War for Independence, and as the chief influence in achieving the formation and adoption of the Constitution, he was now to complete in the office of chief magistrate.

The labors of Washington in the organization and administration of the government are recorded in his own writings with much less completeness than are the other great aspects of his career. During the Revolutionary War the circumstances of his command required the daily preparation of numerous letters to the President of Congress, to the governors of the States, to various officials, friends, and relatives, so that there is hardly a phase of that contest which is not pictured in his correspondence. The movement for the reform of the government likewise drew its inspiration chiefly from him, and the reasons for it, the obstacles that impeded it, and its final achievement are amply recorded in his letters. But while in the Presidency, he was in such constant contact with his advisers, and so much of the work of the day was carried out through the members of his cabinet, that there was less need for him to resort to writing himself. His papers therefore offer a much less complete record of his eight years at the head of the nation than of the eight years which he spent in the field, or the six years which intervened between his retirement from the army and his inauguration as President. For a full explanation of the great policies with which his administration of the government is identified,—the enforcement of neutrality, the organization of the national finances, the conclusion of a treaty of commerce with England, and the suppression of the Whiskey Insurrection,—the writings of Washington must be supplemented by those of his

associates, particularly by those of Hamilton and Jefferson.

When Washington became President, he inherited from the government of the Confederation a series of disagreements with England growing out of the flagrant violations of the treaty of peace by both parties to it, and made the more difficult of settlement because England would neither send a minister to the United States nor agree to a treaty of commerce. Before the arrival of his Secretary of State, Washington began informal negotiations through Gouverneur Morris for the removal of these obstacles to friendly intercourse. His letters to Morris and later to John Jay, whom he sent to London as a special envoy, set forth the principles which he thought should govern our relations with the mother country. His early letters to Morris show much of the skill of a practised diplomat, while his later letter of December 22, 1795, is a comprehensive statement of the whole of the American case against Great Britain.

Closely associated with the questions growing out of our relations with Great Britain was Washington's policy of neutrality. He had long been impressed by the peculiar advantages possessed by America for observing a strict neutrality in her relations with the countries of Europe. More than a year before he became President, he had argued for the adoption of the new Constitution because in the war which then threatened between France and England, America would surely be-

come involved "unless there is energy enough in Government to restrain our people within proper bounds." When the threatened war came, he used the energy of the new government both to "restrain our people within proper bounds" and to establish the principle of neutrality as a part of the system of international law. His writings give a more comprehensive view of his neutrality policy than of any other measure of his administration. In his message to Congress, and in many of his letters he states the principle which guided his conduct toward England and France, while in the *Farewell Address* he reiterates it as a rule which should become a part of the national policy.

Before his accession to the Presidency, Washington had given much thought to the development of the West and the establishment of commercial ties by which it could be firmly knit to the East. By far his most important utterance on this subject, and one of the most important of all his writings, is his letter to Governor Harrison of October 10, 1784. "The suggestions of Washington in his letter to the governor," says Irving, "and his representations during this visit to Richmond, gave the first impulse to the great system of internal improvements since pursued throughout the United States." The people of the States bordering the Atlantic have in general manifested little appreciation of the political, social, and economic development of the West, and of its relative importance in the development of

the country as a whole. The statesmanship of Washington is nowhere more clearly displayed than in his perception of the possibilities of the great region beyond the mountains.

Most of the writings of Washington are merely the papers involved in the current transactions of the day. Three of his papers, however, occupy a distinctive place, and possess peculiar claims to our interest and notice. These are his *Address to the Officers* at Newburgh, his *Letter to the Governors on Disbanding the Army,* and his *Farewell Address.*

These three papers have one feature in common,—all of them relate to civil affairs. They reveal the statesmanship rather than the military skill of their author. The first, while addressed to the officers of the army, is an appeal to them as citizens rather than as soldiers. Its purpose is to deter them from tarnishing the fame which they have won under arms by any unlawful action against the civil authorities. The success of Washington's appeal on this occasion was due to the quality to which so much of his success as a general must be attributed,—namely, his mastery of men and his ability to inspire confidence. In directness and simplicity of language, in cogency of argument, in skill in answering the insinuations contained in the Anonymous Adresses, and in emotional appeal to the patriotism of the assembled officers, this address is the best of all of Washington's writings.

The *Circular Letter to the Governors* was the

first clear revelation to the American people of Washington's qualities as a statesman. This aspect of his character had already been discerned by some of those who had been brought into close contact with him. We know from Patrick Henry how the extent of his information and the soundness of his judgment had impressed his associates in the First Continental Congress. His correspondents during the war must also have seen that he was much more than a skilful soldier. But Washington was neither an orator nor a pamphleteer. The avenues to public notice which had been open to John and Samuel Adams, to Hamilton, Henry, and Jefferson, and which had made the people acquainted with these men, were closed to him. His comprehensive and well-reasoned *Letter to the Governors,* devoted altogether to the questions of civil polity which then confronted the country, must have occasioned surprise in the minds of those who had thought of him only as the devoted patriot and skilful general who had conducted their armies to victory. In this *Letter* he showed that his statesmanship was not inferior to his generalship, and the public accorded instant recognition of the fact. The addresses adopted by the several State legislature in reply to the *Letter* and contemporary comment upon it show that in laying down the command of the army Washington merely exchanged military for civil leadership. His release from the toils of the camp enabled him to devote himself to the more difficult problem of providing a government for the new nation.

By far the best known of Washington's writings, although not intrinsically the best, is the *Farewell Address to the People of the United States.* This occupies a unique place in history. No analogy to it can be found in the annals of other countries. It contains nothing strikingly original. It sets forth no new political principles. It does not stir the emotions nor arouse the imagination. It is not particularly distinguished by aptness of phraseology. It contains no maxims which have entered into the speech of the people. It is not the appeal of a great leader to his followers, summoning them to rally about him in defence of his policies, for its author was just terminating his public career. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, the only document in American history which can compare with it in influence, it was not sent out to the world bearing the endorsement of the nation. With none of those elements which usually lend importance to a state paper, it has nevertheless become a political classic. All its importance is derived from the fact that it is "the disinterested warnings of a parting friend," and that the friend in question was George Washington. Regard for its author and confidence in his judgment and integrity are the foundation of its authority.

The counsel offered in the *Farewell Address,* like that offered in the *Circular Letter to the Governors,* met with immediate acceptance. Writing from The Hague of the election of 1796, before the result of it was known to him, John Quincy

Adams said, "It is yet very uncertain how it will turn.—Nor do I believe it material.—From the reception of the President's address all over the Continent, judge whether *any* successor would dare or could effect a total departure from his system of administration." (*J. Q. Adams to S. Bourne,* February 1, 1797.) Its influence, however, has not been temporary. In most of the great national controversies over questions of public policy, its authority has been invoked,—and not infrequently by the opposite parties to the same controversy. Its beneficent influence as a political force both conservative and uplifting is incalculable. It is not the least of the debts which a grateful country owes to Washington.

Washington belonged to a generation of statesmen famous for their literary abilities. Among them were Franklin, a master of the resources of the English tongue; Hamilton, whose language reflected the lucidity of his mind; Jefferson, whose great polemic, the Declaration of Independence, is a model of its kind; Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams, masters of forensic eloquence, and Gouverneur Morris, whose crisp phrases are preserved in the clauses of the Constitution. Compared with these Washington can make but a poor showing in point of literary style. Indeed much of his writing suffers when judged by any standard of literary excellence. Even his spelling was various and uncertain. Many of his sentences, in their elephantine dignity, reflect the stateliness of their author's personal bearing. Involved and complex,

it is frequently difficult, sometimes even impossible, to discover their meaning, while instances are not wanting in which Washington says directly the contrary of what he obviously intended to say. On the other hand, his writings are filled with passages marked by a noble simplicity of style which would have been creditable to any of his contemporaries. This is particularly conspicuous in his two notable speeches, the address to the officers at Newburgh, and his address to Congress on resigning his commission.

In power of vivid narrative, also, he was not lacking. His reports to Congress of the great events in which he was engaged are, in general, all that they ought to be in point of straightforward description and rehearsal of facts. In his private letters, to the preparation of which he could give less care, his power of concise statement is even more conspicuous. His letter (July 4, 1778) to his favorite brother, in which he describes the situation at the battle of Monmouth when he found General Lee in full retreat, is an example of this. He writes:

"Before this will have reached you, the account of the battle of Monmouth will probably get to Virginia; which, from an unfortunate and bad beginning, turned out a glorious and happy day. . . .

"General Lee, having the command of the van of the army, consisting of full five thousand chosen men, was ordered to begin the attack next morning, so soon as the enemy began their march; to be supported by me; but, strange to tell! when he came up with the enemy,

a retreat commenced; whether by his order, or from other causes, is now the subject of inquiry, and consequently improper to be descanted upon, as he is in arrest, and a court-martial sitting for trial of him. A retreat, however, was the fact, be the causes as they may; and the disorder arising from it would have proved fatal to the army, had not that bountiful Providence, which has never failed us in the hour of distress, enabled me to form a regiment or two (of those that were retreating) in the face of the enemy and under their fire; by which means a stand was made long enough (the place through which the enemy were pursuing being narrow,) to form the troops, that were advancing upon an advantageous piece of ground in the rear. Here our affairs took a favorable turn, and, from being pursued, we drove the enemy back over the ground they had followed, and recovered the field of battle, and possessed ourselves of their dead. But as they retreated behind a morass very difficult to pass, and had both flanks secured with thick woods, it was found impracticable with our men, fainting with fatigue, heat, and want of water, to do anything more that night. In the morning we expected to renew the action; when, behold, the enemy had stole off as silent as the grave in the night, after having sent away their wounded. Getting a night's march of us, and having but ten miles to a strong post, it was judged inexpedient to follow them any further, but move towards the North River, lest they should have any design upon our posts here.

"We buried 245 of their dead on the field of action; they buried several themselves, and many have been since found in the woods, where, during the action, they had drawn them to, and hid them. We have taken five officers and upwards of one hundred prisoners, but the amount of their wounded we have not learnt with any certainty; according to the common proportion of four or five to one, these should be at least a thousand or 1200. Without exaggeration, their trip through the

Jerseys, in killed, wounded, prisoners, and deserters, has cost them at least 2000 men of their best troops. We had 60 men killed, 132 wounded, and about 130 missing, some of whom I suppose may yet come in. Among our slain officers is Major Dickinson and Captain Fauntleroy, two very valuable ones."

Washington was a man of strong feeling, and when under the influence of it he could express himself with a vividness of language which has made some of his phrases classic. The government of the country under the Articles of Confederation is inseparably associated with his description of it as " a half-starved, limping government, that appears to be always moving upon crutches, and tottering at every step." A whole system of political philosophy is summed up in the words, " Influence is no government," while the indifference of the public to the distresses of the army brought out this bit of sarcastic comment:

" The army as usual is without pay, and a great part of the soldiery without shirts; and tho' the patience of them is equally threadbare, it seems to be a matter of small concern to those at a distance. In truth, if one was to hazard an opinion for them on this subject, it would be, that the army having contracted a habit of encountering distress and difficulties, and of living without money, it would be injurious to it, to introduce other customs."

At times he produces a passage of striking eloquence. Jefferson himself could not indict the British government in arguments more cogently

phrased, or more logically arranged, or marshalled in more imposing array, than are to be found in this famous paragraph:

"If every man was of my mind, the ministers of Great Britain should know, in a few words, upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations, nor specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly terms proclaim our wrongs, and our resolution to be redressed. I would tell them, that we had borne much, that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honorable terms, that it had been denied us, that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented, that we had done everything which could be expected from the best of subjects, that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit to slavery, and that, if nothing else could satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we are determined to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under covert, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness."

But perhaps the most important, certainly one of the most interesting aspects of Washington's writings is their revelation of the man. No character in American history has suffered so greatly from overmuch adulation as has he. The Weems tradition has taken such firm root and has grown so much that Washington has come to be regarded somewhat as a force of nature,—majestic, inexplicable, unhuman. To suggest that he might be judged by the canons applied to his associates,—that he was made of such stuff as other men are

made of,—that he had traits of character which were not wholly admirable,—even to hint at these things is still regarded by many as a desecration of his memory. Yet a perusal of his writings, while not detracting in the least from the great qualities which make him unique, shows that he was not free from faults and foibles. His constant profession of the purity of his intentions and his zeal for the public interest, as well as his reiterations of the hardships of his position, seem pedantic and tiresome, and are relieved only by our conviction of his absolute sincerity. His proneness to give advice both to individuals and to the country was in many quarters resented, and in any other man would have been unbearable. His high temper flashes out even in his letters, and must have found frequent expression in the trials of his daily intercourse with men. In serving the public he was not so visionary or devoted to the country as to be unwilling to specify the conditions upon which his services could be had. He was not above dissembling, as is shown in his correspondence with Jefferson, whose professions of devotion he pretended to accept, while acknowledging to others that he was not deceived thereby.

On the other hand, Washington's writings reflect with equal clearness the great qualities which made him the most revered figure in American life. His stalwart resistance to the encroachments of the British government; his absolute devotion of his life and fortune to the cause of independence when he became convinced that independence alone

would secure the rights of America; his courage in the midst of disaster; his persistence in the face of opposition and divided counsels and insufficient support; his patience under trials that would have driven a lesser man to abandon the contest; his lofty view of what the Revolution meant both for those engaged in it and for future generations; his steadfast battle for a national government and his endeavor to give that government a respectable standing, both at home and abroad,—all this shines forth in his writings with unmistakable clearness. Especially do they reveal the great moral qualities which were most strongly marked in his character, and which were the basis of his career. Whether in the management of his private business or in the direction of public enterprises, whether leading the army or presiding over the administration of the government, his action was determined by principles which might well be adopted as universal standards of conduct, and which cannot be better stated than in his own words:

"I must recommend to you what I endeavor to practise myself, patience and perseverance."

"There is but one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily."

Chronology

[In this table events with which Washington was not immediately connected are printed in italics.]

1732, Feb. 22.	Birth of George Washington at Bridge's Creek, Westmoreland County, Virginia.
1751,	Appointed major in the Virginia militia.
1753,	Sent by Governor Dinwiddie as a commissioner to protest against French encroachments in the Ohio Valley.
1754-1763,	The French and Indian War.
1754, April 2,	Washington set out from Alexandria with two companies.
1755,	Appointed colonel on the staff of General Braddock.
1755, July 9,	Defeat and death of General Braddock.
Aug. 14,	Washington appointed commander of all the Virginia forces.
1758, December,	Resigns his commission.
1759, Jan. 6,	Marriage with Mrs. Martha Custis.
1759-1774,	Member of the House of Burgesses of Virginia.
1774, Sept. 5,	Member of the First Continental Congress.
1775, April 19,	*Battle of Lexington and Concord.*
May 10,	Member of the Second Continental Congress.

June 15, Appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.
June 17, *Battle of Bunker Hill.*
July 3, Assumes command of the army at Cambridge.

1776, March 17, Capture of Boston.
July 4, *The Declaration of Independence.*
Aug. 27, Battle of Long Island.
Aug. 29, Retreat from Long Island.
Sept. 12, Retreat from New York.
Oct. 28, Battle of White Plains.
Nov. and Dec., Retreat across New Jersey.
December 12, Congress vests Washington with dictatorial powers.
Dec. 26, Battle of Trenton.

1777, Jan. 3, Battle of Princeton.
Sept. 11, Battle of Brandywine.
Oct. 4, Battle of Germantown.
Oct. 17, *Surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga.*
December, Winter camp established at Valley Forge.

1778, Feb. 6, *Alliance made with France.*
June 28, Battle of Monmouth.
Dec. 29, *The British capture Savannah.*

1779, July 16, Capture of Stony Point.

1780, May 12, *The British capture Charleston.*
Sept. 23. Capture of Major André.

1781, Oct. 19, Surrender of Lord Cornwallis.

1782, Nov. 30, *Preliminary articles of peace with Great Britain signed.*

1783, Jan. 20, Formal cessation of hostilities in America.
March, The Newburg Addresses.
April 19, Cessation of hostilities proclaimed in the American camp.
June 8, Washington's Circular Letter to the Governors on disbanding the army.
Sept. 3, *Treaty of Paris and Versailles.*

1783,	Nov. 25,	Evacuation of New York.
	Dec. 23,	Washington resigns his commission.
1785,	March 28,	The Mt. Vernon Conference.
1786,	September,	*The Annapolis Convention.*
1787,	May 14,	Delegate to the Federal Convention at Philadelphia.
	May 25,	Elected president of the Federal Convention.
	Sept. 17,	The Constitution adopted by the Federal Convention.
1789,	April 6,	Congress counts the electoral votes and finds that Washington is unanimously elected President.
	April 30,	Washington inaugurated.
1792,	December,	Washington unanimously re-elected.
1796,	Sept. 19,	Washington's Farewell Address is published.
1797,	March 4,	Washington retires to private life.
1798,	July 2,	Washington appointed to command the army in the threatened war with France.
1799,	Dec. 14,	Death of Washington at Mt. Vernon.

Washington's Cabinet

Secretary of State

John Jay, of New York, *ad interim*, to March 21, 1790.

Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, March 22, 1790, to December 31, 1793.

Edmund Randolph, of Virginia, January 2, 1794, to August 20, 1795.

Timothy Pickering, of Pennsylvania, (Secretary of War,) *ad interim*, August 20 to December 9, 1795; regular appointment, December 10, 1795, to May 12, 1800.

Secretary of the Treasury

Alexander Hamilton, of New York, September 11, 1789, to January 31, 1795.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., of Connecticut, February 2, 1795, to December 31, 1800.

Secretary of War

Henry Knox, of Massachusetts, September 12, 1789, to December 31, 1794.

Timothy Pickering, of Pennsylvania, January 2, 1795, to February 5, 1796.

James McHenry, of Maryland, February 6, 1796, to May 31, 1800.

Attorney-General

Edmund Randolph, of Virginia, February 2, 1790, to January 2, 1794.

William Bradford, of Pennsylvania, January 29, 1794, to August 23, 1795.

Charles Lee, of Virginia, December 10, 1795, to March 3, 1801.

I

In the British Army and Colonial Councils

The winged years that winnow praise and blame
Blow many names out: they but fan to flame
The self-renewing splendors of thy fame.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

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I

In the British Army and Colonial Councils

TO GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE

FORT CUMBERLAND, 18 July, 1755.

HONBL. SIR,

As I am favored with an opportunity, I should think myself inexcusable was I to omit giving you some account of our late engagement with the French on the Monongahela, the 9th instant.[1]

We continued our march from Fort Cumberland to Frazier's (which is within 7 miles of Duquesne) without meeting any extraordinary event, having

[1] The rivalry between France and England for the possession of North America finally culminated in the French and Indian War. One of the first operations of this war was the despatch of an expedition under Major-General Braddock, a British officer who had seen forty years' service, for the reduction of Fort Duquesne. The expedition was made up of British regulars and colonial militia, and Washington accompanied it as an officer on Braddock's staff with the rank of colonel. Both Franklin, who was then postmaster-general, and Washington repeatedly warned Braddock of the dangers of a campaign in a frontier wilderness against an army of savages. But their advice was not heeded and the expedition marched into the very kind of trap that Washington had foreseen. Franklin gives a very interesting account of his visit to Braddock in his *Autobiography*.

only a straggler or two picked up by the French Indians. When we came to this place, we were attacked (very unexpectedly) by about three hundred French and Indians. Our numbers consisted of about thirteen hundred well armed men, chiefly Regulars, who were immediately struck with such an inconceivable panick, that nothing but confusion and disobedience of orders prevailed among them. The officers, in general, behaved with incomparable bravery, for which they greatly suffered, there being near 60 killed and wounded—a large proportion, out of the number we had!

The Virginia companies behaved like men and died like soldiers; for I believe out of three companies that were on the ground that day scarce thirty were left alive. Capt. Peyroney and all his officers, down to a corporal, were killed; Captn. Polson had almost as hard a fate, for only one of his escaped. In short, the dastardly behaviour of the Regular troops (so-called) exposed those who were inclined to do their duty to almost certain death; and, at length, in despite of every effort to the contrary, broke and ran as sheep before hounds, leaving the artillery, ammunition, provisions, baggage, and, in short, everything a prey to the enemy. And when we endeavoured to rally them, in hopes of regaining the ground and what we had left upon it, it was with as little success as if we had attempted to have stopped the wild bears of the mountains, or rivulets with our feet; for they would break by, in despite of every effort that could be made to prevent it.

The General [Braddock] was wounded in the shoulder and breast, of which he died three days after; his two aids-de-camp were both wounded, but are in a fair way of recovery; Colo. Burton and Sr. John St. Clair are also wounded, and I hope will get over it; Sir Peter Halket, with many other brave officers, were killed in the field. It is supposed that we had three hundred or more killed; about that number we brought off wounded, and it is conjectured (I believe with much truth) that two thirds of both received their shot from our own cowardly Regulars, who gathered themselves into a body, contrary to orders, ten or twelve deep, would then level, fire and shoot down the men before them.

I tremble at the consequences that this defeat may have upon our back settlers, who, I suppose, will all leave their habitations unless there are proper measures taken for their security.

Colo. Dunbar, who commands at present, intends, as soon as his men are recruited at this place, to continue his march to Philadelphia for winter quarters: consequently there will be no men left here, unless it is the shattered remains of the Virginia troops, who are totally inadequate to the protection of the frontiers. * * *

TO JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON

FORT CUMBERLAND, 18 July, 1755.

DEAR BROTHER,

As I have heard, since my arrival at this place,

a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you, that I have not as yet composed the latter. But, by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho' death was levelling my companions on every side of me!

We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men, but fatigue and want of time will prevent me from giving you any of the details, until I have the happiness of seeing you at Mount Vernon, which I now most ardently wish for, since we are drove in thus far. A weak and feeble state of health obliges me to halt here for two or three days, to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homewards with more ease. You may expect to see me there on Saturday or Sunday se'-night, which is as soon as I can well be down, as I shall take my Bullskin Plantations in my way. Pray give my compliments to all my friends. I am, dear Jack, your most affectionate brother.

TO MRS. MARTHA CUSTIS

July 20, 1758.

We have begun our march for the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one

whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another Self. That an all-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend.[1]

TO FRANCIS DANDRIDGE, LONDON

MOUNT VERNON, 20 September, 1765.

SIR,

* * * At present few things are under notice of my observation that can afford you any amuse-

[1] In the summer of 1758, Washington accompanied an expedition under General Forbes which crossed the mountains for the purpose of expelling the French from the Ohio valley. As the latter were greatly outnumbered and were being deserted by their Indian allies, they set fire to Fort Duquesne and abandoned the country. Upon Washington's return to Virginia, he resigned his commission, and on January 6, 1759, he was married to Martha Custis, daughter of John Dandridge and widow of Daniel Parke Custis. In his absence with the expedition to Fort Duquesne, he was elected a member of the House of Burgesses. When he joined that body, the House instructed its Speaker, Robinson, to thank him for his services to the colony. "As soon as Colonel Washington took his seat, Mr. Robinson, in obedience to this order, and following the impulse of his own generous and grateful heart, discharged the duty with great dignity, but with such warmth of coloring, and strength of expression as entirely to confound the young hero. He rose to express his acknowledgments for the honor; but such was his trepidation and confusion, that he could not give distinct utterance to a syllable. He blushed, stammered, and trembled for a second; when the Speaker relieved him, by a stroke of address, that would have done honor to Louis the Fourteenth, in his proudest and happiest moment. 'Sit down, Mr. Washington,' said he, with a conciliating smile, 'your modesty is equal to your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess.'"—Wirt, *Life of Patrick Henry*, 45.

ment in the recital. The Stamp Act, imposed on the colonies by the Parliament of Great Britain, engrosses the conversation of the speculative part of the colonists, who look upon this unconstitutional method of taxation, as a direful attack upon their liberties, and loudly exclaim against the violation.[1] What may be the result of this, and of some other (I think I may add) ill-judged measures, I will not undertake to determine; but this I may venture to affirm, that the advantage accruing to the mother country will fall greatly short of the expectations of the ministry; for certain it is, that our whole substance does already in a manner flow to Great Britain, and that whatsoever contributes to lessen our importations must be hurtful to their manufacturers. And the eyes of our people, already beginning to open, will perceive, that many luxuries, which we lavish our substance in Great

[1] In 1764, the British Cabinet gave notice that at the next session of Parliament a measure for raising revenue in the colonies would be introduced. The proposition encountered great opposition in America, and Benjamin Franklin was appointed agent in London for Pennsylvania and several other colonies to protest against its enactment. The measure however was adopted and received the King's sanction March 22, 1765. On May 30th, the House of Burgesses of Virginia passed a resolution to the effect that taxation by themselves or by their representatives was the attribute of every English subject, and that they would obey no law other than those passed by their own General Assembly. This came to be the general sentiment throughout the colonies, and it was asserted so strenuously that on February 22, 1766, the House of Commons voted to repeal the obnoxious law. The repeal was accompanied however by a resolution asserting that Parliament had the absolute right to tax the colonies, the declarations of their legislatures to the contrary notwithstanding.

Britain for, can well be dispensed with, whilst the necessaries of life are (mostly) to be had within ourselves. This, consequently, will introduce frugality, and be a necessary stimulation to industry. If Great Britain, therefore, loads her manufacturies with heavy taxes, will it not facilitate these measures? They will not compel us, I think, to give our money for their exports, whether we will or not; and certain, I am none of their traders will part from them without a valuable consideration. Where, then, is the utility of these restrictions?

As to the Stamp Act, taken in a single view, one and the first bad consequence attending it, I take to be this, our courts of judicature must inevitably be shut up; for it is impossible, (or next of kin to it), under our present circumstances, that the act of Parliament can be complied with, were we ever so willing to enforce the execution; for, not to say, which alone would be sufficient, that we have not money to pay the stamps, there are many other cogent reasons, to prevent it; and if a stop be put to our judicial proceedings, I fancy the merchants of Great Britain, trading to the colonies, will not be among the last to wish for a repeal of it.[1]

[1] "Unseasonable as it may be, to take any notice of the repeal of the Stamp Act at this time, yet I cannot help observing, that a contrary measure would have introduced very unhappy consequences. Those, therefore, who wisely foresaw such an event, and were instrumental in procuring the repeal of the act, are, in my opinion, deservedly entitled to the thanks of the well-wishers to Britain and her colonies, and must reflect with pleasure, that, through their means, many scenes of confusion and distress have been prevented. Mine they accordingly have, and always shall have, for their opposition to any

TO GEORGE MASON [1]

MOUNT VERNON, 5 April, 1769.

DEAR SIR,

Herewith you will receive a letter and sundry papers,[2] which were forwarded to me a day or two ago by Dr. Ross of Bladensburg. I transmit them with the greater pleasure, as my own desire of knowing your sentiments upon a matter of this importance exactly coincides with the Doctor's inclinations.

At a time, when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert

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act of oppression; and that act could be looked upon in no other light by every person, who would view it in its proper colors.

"I could wish it was in my power to congratulate you on the success in having the commercial system of these colonies put upon a more enlarged and extensive footing, than it is; because I am well satisfied, that it would ultimately redound to the advantage of the mother country, so long as the colonies pursue trade and agriculture, and would be an effectual let to manufacturing among them. The money, therefore which they raise, would center in Great Britain, as certainly as the needle will settle to the poles."—*Washington to Capel and Osgood Hanbury*, 25 July, 1767.

[1] A neighbor and intimate friend of Washington, who afterwards distinguished himself by drafting the first constitution of Virginia, and by the ability he displayed in the Convention for forming the Constitution of the United States, and also in the Virginia Convention for adopting that instrument. He was opposed to the Constitution, as encroaching too much on State rights, and containing the principles of a consolidated government.—*Sparks.*

[2] Containing resolves of the merchants of Philadelphia, respecting the non-importation of articles of British manufacture.—*Sparks.*

the stroke, and maintain the liberty, which we have derived from our ancestors. But the manner of doing it, to answer the purpose effectually, is the point in question.

That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use a—ms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet a—ms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the *dernier resort.* Addresses to the throne, and remonstrances to Parliament, we have already, it is said, proved the inefficacy of. How far, then, their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed, by starving their trade and manufactures, remains to be tried.

The northern colonies, it appears, are endeavoring to adopt this scheme. In my opinion it is a good one, and must be attended with salutary effects, provided it can be carried pretty generally into execution. But to what extent it is practicable to do so, I will not take upon me to determine. That there will be difficulties attending the execution of it every where, from clashing interests, and selfish, designing men, (ever attentive to their own gain, and watchful of every turn, that can assist their lucrative views, in preference to every other consideration) cannot be denied; but in the tobacco colonies, where the trade is so diffused, and in a manner wholly conducted by factors for their principals at home, these difficulties are certainly enhanced, but I think not insurmountably increased, if the gentlemen in their several counties will be at

some pains to explain matters to the people, and stimulate them to a cordial agreement to purchase none but certain enumerated articles out of any of the stores after such a period, nor import nor purchase any themselves. This, if it did not effectually withdraw the factors from their importations, would at least make them extremely cautious in doing it, as the prohibited goods could be vended to none but the non-associators, or those who would pay no regard to their association; both of whom ought to be stigmatized, and made the objects of public reproach.

The more I consider a scheme of this sort, the more ardently I wish success to it, because I think there are private as well as public advantages to result from it,—the former certain, however precarious the other may prove. For in respect to the latter, I have always thought, that by virtue of the same power, (for here alone the authority derives) which assumes the right of taxation, they may attempt at least to refrain our manufactories, especially those of a public nature, the same equity and justice prevailing in the one case as the other, it being no greater hardship to forbid my manufacturing, than it is to order me to buy goods of them loaded with duties, for the express purpose of raising a revenue. But as a measure of this sort would be an additional exertion of arbitrary power, we cannot be worsted, I think, by putting it to the test.

On the other hand, that the colonies are considerably indebted to Great Britain, is a truth uni-

versally acknowledged. That many families are reduced almost, if not quite, to penury and want from the low ebb of their fortunes, and estates daily selling for the discharge of debts, the public papers furnish but too many melancholy proofs of, and that a scheme of this sort will contribute more effectually than any other I can devise to emerge the country from the distress it at present labors under, I do most firmly believe, if it can be generally adopted. And I can see but one set of people (the merchants excepted,) who will not, or ought not, to wish well to the scheme, and that is those who live genteelly and hospitably on clear estates. Such as these, were they not to consider the valuable object in view, and the good of others, might think it hard to be curtailed in their living and enjoyments. For as to the penurious man, he saves his money and he saves his credit, having the best plea for doing that, which before, perhaps, he had the most violent struggles to refrain from doing. The extravagant and expensive man has the same good plea to retrench his expenses. He is thereby furnished with a pretext to live within bounds, and embraces it. Prudence dictated economy to him before, but his resolution was too weak to put it in practice; For how can I, *says he,* who have lived in such and such a manner, change my method? I am ashamed to do it, and, besides, such an alteration in the system of my living will create suspicions of the decay in my fortune, and such a thought the world must not harbour. I will e'en continue my course, till at last the course discon-

tinues the estate, a sale of it being the consequence of his perseverance in error. This I am satisfied is the way, that many, who have set out in the wrong track, have reasoned, till ruin stares them in the face. And in respect to the poor and needy man, he is only left in the same situation that he was found,—better, I might say, because, as he judges from comparison, his condition is amended in proportion as it approaches nearer to those above him.

Upon the whole, therefore, I think the scheme a good one, and that it ought to be tried here, with such alterations as the exigency of our circumstances renders absolutely necessary. But how, and in what manner to begin the work, is a matter worthy of consideration, and whether it can be attempted with propriety or efficacy (further than a communication of sentiments to one another) before May, when the Court and Assembly will meet in Williamsburg, and a uniform plan can be concerted, and sent into the different counties to operate at the same time and in the same manner everywhere, is a thing I am somewhat in doubt upon, and should be glad to know your opinion of.[1]

[1] "If there are any articles contained in either of the respective invoices (paper only excepted) which are taxed by act of Parliament for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, it is my express desire and request, that they may not be sent, as I have very heartily entered into an association (copies of which I make no doubt you have seen, otherwise I should have enclosed one) not to import any article which now is, or hereafter shall be taxed for this purpose until the said act or acts are repealed. I am therefore particular in mentioning this matter as I am fully determined to adhere religiously to it, and may perhaps have wrote for some things unwittingly which

TO BRYAN FAIRFAX

MOUNT VERNON, 4 July, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

* * * As to your political sentiments, I would heartily join you in them, so far as relates to a humble and dutiful petition to the throne, provided there was the most distant hope of success. But have we not tried this already? Have we not addressed the Lords, and remonstrated to the Commons? And to what end? Did they deign to look at our petitions? Does it not appear, as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness, that there is a regular, systematic plan formed to fix the right and practice of taxation upon us? Does not the uniform conduct of Parliament for some years past confirm this? Do not all the debates, especially those just brought to us, in the House of Commons on the side of government, expressly declare that America must be taxed in aid of the British funds, and that she has no longer resources within herself? Is there any thing to be expected from petitioning after this? Is not the attack upon the liberty and property of the people of Boston, before restitution of the loss to the India Company was demanded, a plain and self-evident proof of what they are aiming at? Do not the subsequent bills (now I dare say acts), for depriving the Massachusetts Bay of its charter, and for transporting offenders into other colonies or to Great Britain

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may be under these circumstances."—*Washington to Robert Cary, London*, 25 July, 1769.

for trial, where it is impossible from the nature of the thing that justice can be obtained, convince us that the administration is determined to stick at nothing to carry its point? Ought we not, then, to put our virtue and fortitude to the severest test?

With you I think it a folly to attempt more than we can execute, as that will not only bring disgrace upon us, but weaken our cause; yet I think we may do more than is generally believed, in respect to the non-importation scheme. As to the withholding of our remittances, that is another point, in which I own I have my doubts on several accounts, but principally on that of justice; for I think, whilst we are accusing others of injustice, we should be just ourselves; and how this can be, whilst we owe a considerable debt, and refuse payment of it to Great Britain, is to me inconceivable. Nothing but the last extremity, I think, can justify it. Whether this is now come, is the question. * * *

TO BRYAN FAIRFAX

MOUNT VERNON, 20 July, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 17th was not presented to me till after the resolutions, (which were adjudged advisable for this county to come to), had been revised, altered, and corrected in the committee; nor till we had gone into a general meeting in the court-house, and my attention necessarily called

every moment to the business that was before it.[1] I did, however, upon receipt of it, (in that hurry and bustle,) hastily run it over, and handed it round to the gentlemen on the bench of which there were many; but, as no person present seemed in the least disposed to adopt your sentiments, as there appeared a perfect satisfaction and acquiescence in the measures proposed (except from a Mr. Williamson, who was for adopting your advice literally, without obtaining a second voice on his side), and as the gentlemen, to whom the letter was shown, advised me not to have it read, as it was not like to make a convert, and repugnant, (some of them thought,) to the very principle we were contending for, I forbore to offer it otherwise than in the manner above mentioned; which I shall be sorry for, if it gives you any dissatisfaction in not having your sentiments read to the county at large, instead of communicating them to the first people in it, by offering them the letter in the manner I did.

That I differ very widely from you, in respect to the mode of obtaining a defeat [repeal] of the

[1] The inhabitants of Fairfax County had assembled, and appointed a committee for drawing up resolutions expressive of their sentiments on the great topics which agitated the country. Washington was chairman of this committee, and moderator of the meetings held by the people. An able report was prepared by the committee, containing a series of resolutions, which were presented at a general meeting of the inhabitants at the court-house in Fairfax County on the 18th of July. [It is printed in Force's *American Archives*, Fourth Series, i., 597, and in Sparks, *The Writings of Washington*, ii., 488.]

Mr. Bryan Fairfax, who had been present on former occa-

acts so much and so justly complained of, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge; and that this difference in opinion may probably proceed from the different constructions we put upon the conduct and intention of the ministry may also be true; but, as I see nothing, on the one hand, to induce a belief that the Parliament would embrace a favorable opportunity of repealing acts, which they go on with great rapidity to pass, and in order to enforce their tyrannical system; and, on the other, I observe, or think I observe, that government is pursuing a regular plan at the expense of law and justice to overthrow our constitutional rights and liberties, how can I expect any redress from a measure, which has been ineffectually tried already? For, Sir, what is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of three pence per pound on tea because burthensome? No, it is the right only, we have all along disputed, and to this end we have already petitioned his Majesty in as humble and dutiful manner as subjects could do. Nay, more, we applied to the House of Lords and House of Commons in their different legislative capacities, setting forth, that, as Englishmen, we could not be deprived of this essential and valuable part of a constitution. If, then, as the fact really is, it is against the right of taxation that we now do, and, (as I before said,) all along have contended,

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sions, not approving all the resolutions, absented himself from this meeting, and wrote a long letter to the chairman, stating his views and objections, with the request that it should be publicly read.—*Sparks.*

why should they suppose an exertion of this power would be less obnoxious now than formerly? And what reasons have we to believe, that they would make a second attempt, while the same sentiments filled the breast of every American, if they did not intend to enforce it if possible?[1]

[1] Mr. Fairfax had written:—"I come now to consider a resolve, which ought to be the most objected to, as tending more to widen the breach, and prevent a reconciliation than any other. I mean that, wherein the authority of Parliament is almost in every instance denied. Something similar to this, though more imprudent, is the most exceptionable part of the conduct of some in New England. It has been asserted in the House of Commons, that America has been gradually encroaching; that, as they have given up points, we have insisted on more. The fact is true, as to encroachment, but the reason assigned is wrong. It is not because they have given up points, but because they have not given them up, that we out of resentment demand more than we at first thought of. But however natural it is for people incensed to increase their claims, and whatever our anger may induce us to say, in calm deliberations we should not insist on any thing unreasonable. We have all along submitted to the authority of Parliament. From the first settlement of the colonies I believe there never was an act of Parliament disputed, till the famous Stamp Act. It is a maxim in law, that all the acts made since the settlement of the colonies do not extend here, unless the colonies are particularly named; therefore all acts wherein they are included do extend here.

"When the Stamp Act was repealed, it was said, and I did not hear it contradicted, that the Americans objected to internal taxes, but not to external duties. When the duty on tea was laid, as an external duty, we objected to it, and with some reason, because it was not for the regulation of trade, but for the express purpose of raising a revenue. This was deemed a small encroachment on our first demands. Some now object to the authority, which has established and regulated the post-office, a very useful regulation. Others deny their authority in regard to our internal affairs. If we go on at this rate, it is impossible, that the troubles of America should ever have an end. Whatever we may wish to be the case, it becomes good

The conduct of the Boston people could not justify the rigor of their measures, unless there had been a requisition of payment and refusal of it; nor did that measure require an act to deprive the government of Massachusetts Bay of their charter, or to exempt offenders from trial in the place where offences were committed, as there was not, nor could not be, a single instance produced to manifest the necessity of it. Are not all these things self-evident proofs of a fixed and uniform plan to tax us? If we want further proofs, do not all the debates in the House of Commons serve to confirm this? And has not General Gage's conduct since his arrival, (in stopping the address of his Council, and publishing a proclamation more becoming a Turkish bashaw, than an English governor, declaring it treason to associate in any manner by which the commerce of Great Britain is to be affected,) exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny, that ever was practised in a free government? In short, what further proofs are wanted to satisfy one of the designs of the ministry, than their own acts, which are uniform

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subjects to submit to the constitution of their country. Whenever a political establishment has been settled, it ought to be considered what that is, and not what it ought to be. To fix a contrary principle is to lay the foundation of continual broils and revolutions.

"The Parliament from prescription have a right to make laws binding on the colonies, except those imposing taxes. From prescription the Americans are exempt from taxation. Let us stand upon good ground in our opposition, otherwise many upon reflection may desert the cause. Therefore I hope some alteration will be made in the second resolve, or that nothing under this head will be mentioned."—*Sparks.*

and plainly tending to the same point, nay, if I mistake not, avowedly to fix the right of taxation? What hope then from petitioning, when they tell us, that now or never is the time to fix the matter? Shall we, after this, whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a prey to despotism? If I was in any doubt, as to the right which the Parliament of Great Britain had to tax us without our consent, I should most heartily coincide with you in opinion, that to petition, and petition only, is the proper method to apply for relief; because we should then be asking a favor, and not claiming a right, which, by the law of nature and our constitution, we are, in my opinion, indubitably entitled to. I should even think it criminal to go further than this, under such an idea; but none such I have. I think the Parliament of Great Britain hath no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into yours for money; and this being already urged to them in a firm, but decent manner, by all the colonies, what reason is there to expect any thing from their justice?

As to the resolution for addressing the throne, I own to you, Sir, I think the whole might as well have been expunged. I expect nothing from the measure, nor should my voice have accompanied it, if the non-importation scheme was intended to be retarded by it; [1] for I am convinced, as much as I

[1] Among the Alexandria resolves, which were the subject of Mr. Fairfax's letter, there was one for petitioning the King.

am of my existence, that there is no relief but in their distress; and I think, at least I hope, that there is public virtue enough left among us to deny ourselves every thing but the bare necessaries of life to accomplish this end. This we have a right to do, and no power upon earth can compel us to do otherwise, till they have first reduced us to the most abject state of slavery that ever was designed for mankind. The stopping our exports would, no doubt, be a shorter cut than the other to effect this purpose; but if we owe money to Great Britain, nothing but the last necessity can justify the non-payment of it; and, therefore, I have great doubts upon this head, and wish to see the other method first tried, which is legal and will facilitate these payments.

I cannot conclude without expressing some con-

In relation to this, he wrote:—"I hope it will be recommended, that, if a petition should be agreed upon, and sent home by the general Congress, no conditional resolution, which may be formed at the time, should be published until it is known, that the petition has had no effect. For we should otherwise destroy the very intention of it. To petition and to threaten at the same time seem to be inconsistent. It might be of service with the ministry, if they have evil designs, to know the dispositions of the people here. I am sure that sufficiently appears from what has already been published. And if that appears, no threatenings ought to accompany the petition. It ought to be as modest as possible, without descending to meanness. There is one expression, then, in one of our resolves, which I much object to; that is, a hint to the King, that, if his Majesty will not comply, there lies but one appeal. This ought surely to be erased. There are two methods proposed to effect a repeal; the one by petition, the other by compulsion. They ought then to be kept separate and distinct, and we shall find few for joining them together, who are not rather against the former."—*Sparks.*

cern, that I should differ so widely in sentiment from you, in a matter of such great moment and general import; and should much distrust my own judgment upon the occasion, if my nature did not recoil at the thought of submitting to measures, which I think subversive of every thing that I ought to hold dear and valuable, and did I not find, at the same time, that the voice of mankind is with me. * * *

TO BRYAN FAIRFAX

MOUNT VERNON, 24 August, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 5th instant [1] came to this place, forwarded by Mr. Ramsay, a few days after my return from Williamsburg, and I delayed acknowledging it sooner, in the hopes that I should find time, before I began my other journey to Philadelphia,[2] to answer it fully, if not satisfactorily; but, as much of my time has been engrossed since I came home by company, by your brother's sale and the business consequent thereupon, in writing letters to England, and now in attending to my own domestic affairs previous to my departure as above, I find it impossible to bestow so much time and attention to the subject matter of your letter

[1] The letter of Bryan Fairfax to which this is a reply is an excellent statement of the views of a moderate loyalist, and is printed in full in Ford, *The Writings of George Washington*, ii., 429.

[2] To attend the First Continental Congress, to which he was a delegate from Virginia.

as I could wish to do, and therefore, must rely upon your good nature and candor in excuse for not attempting it. In truth, persuaded as I am, that you have read all the political pieces, which compose a large share of the *Gazette* at this time, I should think it, but for your request, a piece of inexcusable arrogance in me, to make the least essay towards a change in your political opinions; for I am sure I have no new lights to throw upon the subject, or any other arguments to offer in support of my own doctrine, than what you have seen; and could only in general add, that an innate spirit of freedom first told me, that the measures, which administration hath for some time been, and now are most violently pursuing, are repugnant to every principle of natural justice; whilst much abler heads than my own hath fully convinced me, that it is not only repugnant to natural right, but subversive of the laws and constitution of Great Britain itself, in the establishment of which some of the best blood in the kingdom hath been spilt. Satisfied, then, that the acts of a British Parliament are no longer governed by the principles of justice, that it is trampling upon the valuable rights of Americans, confirmed to them by charter and the constitution they themselves boast of, and convinced beyond the smallest doubt, that these measures are the result of deliberation, and attempted to be carried into execution by the hand of power, is it a time to trifle, or risk our cause upon petitions, which with difficulty obtain access, and afterwards are thrown by with the utmost con-

tempt? Or should we, because heretofore unsuspicious of design, and then unwilling to enter into disputes with the mother country, go on to bear more, and forbear to enumerate our just causes of complaint? For my own part, I shall not undertake to say where the line between Great Britain and the colonies should be drawn; but I am clearly of opinion, that one ought to be drawn, and our rights clearly ascertained. I could wish, I own, that the dispute had been left to posterity to determine, but the crisis is arrived when we must assert our rights, or submit to every imposition, that can be heaped upon us, till custom and use shall make us as tame and abject slaves, as the blacks we rule over with such arbitrary sway.

I intended to have wrote no more than an apology for not writing; but I find I am insensibly running into a length I did not expect, and therefore shall conclude with remarking, that, if you disavow the right of Parliament to tax us, (unrepresented as we are,) we only differ in respect to the mode of opposition, and this difference principally arises from your belief, that they—the Parliament, I mean,—want a decent opportunity to repeal the acts; whilst I am as fully convinced, as I am of my own existence, that there has been a regular, systematic plan formed to enforce them, and that nothing but unanimity in the colonies (a stroke they did not expect) and firmness, can prevent it. It seems from the best advices from Boston, that General Gage is exceedingly disconcerted at the quiet and steady conduct of the people of

the Massachusetts Bay, and at the measures pursuing by the other governments; as I dare say he expected to have forced those oppressed people into compliance, or irritated them to acts of violence before this, for a more colorable pretense of ruling that and the other colonies with a high hand. But I am done.

I shall set off on Wednesday next for Philadelphia, whither, if you have any commands, I shall be glad to oblige you in them; being, dear Sir, with real regard, &c.

P.S. Pray what do you think of the Canada Bill?

TO CAPTAIN ROBERT MACKENZIE.

PHILADELPHIA, 9 October, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 13th ultimo from Boston gave me pleasure, as I learnt thereby, that you were well, and might be expected at Mount Vernon in your way to or from James River, in the course of the winter.[1]

[1] "At that Congress [the first Continental], Washington had appeared as one of the representatives of Virginia, but apparently not yet clear as to what extent it was proper to involve himself in the difficulties into which Massachusetts was plunged. There is reason to suppose that he shared somewhat in the distrust generally felt, south of New England, of the purposes of the Massachusetts leaders. Whilst in this state of mind, he received a letter from Captain MacKenzie. MacKenzie was a native of Virginia, and an acquaintance of Washington, who had taken a commission in the British army, and was at this time attached to one of the regiments stationed at

When I have said this, permit me with the freedom of a friend (for you know I always esteemed you) to express my sorrow, that fortune should place you in a service, that must fix curses to the latest posterity upon the contrivers, and, if success (which, by the by, is impossible) accompanies it, execrations upon all those, who have been instrumental in the execution.

I do not mean by this to insinuate, that an officer is not to discharge his duty, even when chance, not choice, has placed him in a disagreeable situation; but I conceive, when you condemn the conduct of the Massachusetts people, you reason from effects, not causes; otherwise you would not wonder at a people, who are every day receiving fresh proofs of a systematic assertion of an arbitrary power, deeply planned to overturn the laws and constitution of their country, and to violate the most essential and valuable rights of mankind, being

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Boston. The object of the letter was to prejudice his mind against the action of the people of Massachusetts, and to induce him to exert his influence to counteract the policy their delegates were advocating in Philadelphia. Determined to satisfy himself as to the true character and designs of these delegates, he seems to have sought an interview and free conference with them at their lodgings. That interview took place on the evening of the 28th of September, 1774. Richard Henry Lee, and Dr. Shippen of Philadelphia, were also present. It seems to have settled all Washington's doubts, if he had any; for instead of noisy, brawling demagogues, meaning mischief only, he found the delegates plain, downright practical men, seeking safety from oppression, and contemplating violence only as a result of an absolute necessity forced on them by the government at home. The effect of this conference is made visible in his answer to MacKenzie."—Charles Francis Adams, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, iv., 69.

irritated, and with difficulty restrained from acts of the greatest violence and intemperance. For my own part, I confess to you candidly, that I view things in a very different point of light from the one in which you seem to consider them; and though you are led to believe by venal men,—for such I must take the liberty of calling those new-fangled counsellors, who fly to and surround you, and all others, who, for honors or pecuniary gratifications, will lend their aid to overturn the constitution, and introduce a system of arbitrary government,—although you are taught, I say, by discoursing with such men, to believe, that the people of Massachusetts are rebellious, setting up for independency, and what not, give me leave, my good friend, to tell you, that you are abused, grossly abused. This I advance with a degree of confidence and boldness, which may claim your belief, having better opportunities of knowing the real sentiments of the people you are among, from the leaders of them, in opposition to the present measures of the administration, than you have from those whose business it is, not to disclose truths, but to misrepresent facts in order to justify as much as possible to the world their own conduct. Give me leave to add, and I think I can announce it as a fact, that it is not the wish or interest of that government, or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence; but this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever submit to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges, which are

essential to the happiness of every free state, and without which, life, liberty, and property are rendered totally insecure.

These, Sir, being certain consequences, which must naturally result from the late acts of Parliament relative to America in general, and the government of Massachusetts Bay in particular, is it to be wondered at, I repeat, that men, who wish to avert the impending blow, should attempt to oppose it in its progress, or prepare for their defence, if it cannot be averted? Surely I may be allowed to answer in the negative; and again give me leave to add as my opinion, that more blood will be spilled on this occasion, if the ministry are determined to push matters to extremity, than history has ever yet furnished instances of in the annals of North America, and such a vital wound will be given to the peace of this great country, as time itself cannot cure, or eradicate the remembrance of.

But I have done.[1] I was involuntarily led into a short discussion of this subject by your remarks on the conduct of the Boston people, and your opinion of their wishes to set up for independency. I am well satisfied, that no such thing is desired by any thinking man in all North America; on the contrary, that it is the ardent wish of the warmest

[1] This letter was written while Washington was in Philadelphia attending the sessions of the First Continental Congress. Something of the impression that he made upon his associates in that body may be gleaned from the report of Patrick Henry. That statesman upon his return to Virginia was asked whom he regarded as the greatest man in the Con-

advocates for liberty, that peace and tranquillity, upon constitutional grounds, may be restored, and the horrors of civil discord prevented. * * *

gress. His reply was, "If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor."—Wirt, *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry*, 113.

II

In the War for Independence

Who can hope ever to know the mind and conscience of our Revolution, its motive, its conduct, its stern and patient purpose, or its cost, without studying Washington's letters?

MOSES COIT TYLER.

II

In the War for Independence

ADDRESS ACCEPTING THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY, 16 JUNE, 1775.[1]

MR. PRESIDENT,

Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty and exert every power I possess in the service

[1] On June 15, 1775, the Continental Congress resolved "that a General be appointed to command all the continental forces raised, or to be raised, for the defence of American liberty," and "that five hundred dollars, per month, be allowed for his pay and expences." A ballot then being taken, Washington was unanimously elected. The next day, Friday, June 16, "the president [John Hancock] from the chair informed Geo: Washington Esqr. that he had the order of Congress to acquaint him that the Congress had by a unanimous vote made choice of him to be general and commander in chief to take the supreme command of the forces raised and to be raised, in defence of American Liberty, and desired his acceptance of it. Whereupon Colonel Washington, standing in his place," accepted the appointment. See *The Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (Ford's edition), ii., 91, 92.

COMMISSION AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

In Congress.

The *delegates of the United Colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New Castle, Kent & Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina*

To **George Washington** *Esquire*

We *reposing especial trust and confidence in your patriotism, conduct and fidelity* DO *by these presents constitute and appoint you to be* **General and Commander in Chief** *of the Army of the United Colonies and of all the forces raised or to be raised by them and of all others who shall voluntary offer their service and join the said army for the defence of American Liberty and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof.* AND *you are hereby vested with full power and authority to act as you shall think for the good and welfare of the service.*

And *we do hereby strictly charge and require all officers and soldiers under your command to be obedient to your orders & diligent in the exercise of their several duties.*

And *we do also enjoin and require you to be careful in executing the great trust reposed in you, by causing strict discipline and order to be observed in the army and that the soldiers are duly exercised and provided with all convenient necessaries.*

And *you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war (as herewith given you) and punctually to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as you shall receive from this or a future Congress of the said United Colonies or a committee of Congress for that purpose appointed.*

THIS COMMISSION *to continue in force until revoked by this or a future Congress.*

By order of the Congress
JOHN HANCOCK *President*

Dated, Philadelphia June 19th 1775.

Attest CHAS. THOMSON *Secr.*

and for support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation. But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.

As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those I doubt not they will discharge, and that is all I desire.

TO MRS. MARTHA WASHINGTON [1]

PHILADELPHIA, 18 June, 1775.

MY DEAREST,

I am now set down to write to you on a subject, which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased, when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress, that the

[1] "Washington was not only too reserved, but he had too much true sentiment, to leave his correspondence with Mrs. Washington behind him. * * * Only one letter to Mrs. Washington apparently has survived."—Lodge, *George Washington*, ii., 363. This statement is not quite correct. At least two letters to Mrs. Washington survive (see page 6 for the first one), and are interesting evidence of the warmth of Washington's affections. A man so cold and unresponsive as he is commonly represented to be could not have written such letters.

whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment, without exposing my character to such censures, as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that Providence, which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return safe to you in the fall. I shall feel no pain from

the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg, that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen. My earnest and ardent desire is, that you would pursue any plan that is most likely to produce content, and a tolerable degree of tranquillity; as it must add greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear, that you are dissatisfied or complaining at what I really could not avoid.

As life is always uncertain, and common prudence dictates to every man the necessity of settling his temporal concerns, while it is in his power, and while the mind is calm and undisturbed, I have, since I came to this place (for I had not time to do it before I left home) got Colonel Pendleton to draft a will for me, by the directions I gave him, which will I now enclose. The provision made for you in case of my death will, I hope, be agreeable.

I shall add nothing more, as I have several letters to write, but to desire that you will remember me to your friends, and to assure you that I am, with the most unfeigned regard, my dear Patsy, your affectionate, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

CAMP AT CAMBRIDGE, 21 September, 1775.

SIR,

I have been in daily expectation of being favored

with the commands of the honorable Congress on the subject of my two last letters. The season now advances so fast, that I cannot any longer defer laying before them such further measures as require their immediate attention, and in which I wait their direction.

The mode in which the present army has been collected has occasioned some difficulty, in procuring the subscription of both officers and soldiers to the Continental articles of war. Their principal objection has been, that it might subject them to a longer service, than that for which they engaged under their several provincial establishments. It is in vain to attempt to reason away the prejudices of a whole army, often instilled, and in this instance at least encouraged, by their officers from private and narrow views. I have therefore forbore pressing them, as I did not experience any such inconvenience from their adherence to their former rules, as would warrant the risk of entering into a contest upon it; more especially as the restraints, necessary for the establishment of essential discipline and subordination, indisposed their minds to every change, and made it both duty and policy to introduce as little novelty as possible. With the present army, I fear, such a subscription is impracticable; but the difficulty will cease with this army.[1]

The Connecticut and Rhode Island troops stand

[1] The Continental Articles of War, or as they were otherwise called, "Rules and Regulations for the Army," may be seen in the *Journals of Congress*, 30 June, 1775.—*Sparks.*

engaged to the 1st of December only; and none longer than the 1st of January. A dissolution of the present army therefore will take place, unless some early provision is made against such an event. Most of the general officers are of opinion, that the greater part of them may be reënlisted for the winter, or another campaign, with the indulgence of a furlough to visit their friends, which may be regulated so as not to endanger the service. How far it may be proper to form the new army entirely out of the old, for another campaign, rather than from the contingents of the several provinces, is a question which involves in it too many considerations of policy and prudence, for me to undertake to decide. It appears to be impossible to draw it from any other source than the old army, for this winter; and, as the pay is ample, I hope a sufficient number will engage in the service for that time at least. But there are various opinions of the temper of the men on the subject; and there may be great hazard in deferring the trial too long. * * *

It gives me great pain to be obliged to solicit the attention of the honorable Congress to the state of this army, in terms which imply the slightest apprehension of being neglected. But my situation is inexpressibly distressing, to see the winter fast approaching upon a naked army, the time of their service within a few weeks of expiring, and no provision yet made for such important events. Added to these, the military chest is totally exhausted; the paymaster has not a single dollar in hand; the commissary-general assures me he has strained his

credit, for the subsistence of the army, to the utmost. The quartermaster-general is precisely in the same situation; and the greater part of the troops are in a state not far from mutiny, upon the deduction from their stated allowance. I know not to whom I am to impute this failure; but I am of opinion, if the evil is not immediately remedied, and more punctually observed in future, the army must absolutely break up. I hoped I had expressed myself so fully on this subject, both by letter, and to those members of the Congress, who honored the camp with a visit, that no disappointment could possibly happen. I therefore hourly expected advice from the paymaster, that he had received a fresh supply, in addition to the hundred and seventy-two thousand dollars delivered him in August; and thought myself warranted to assure the public creditors, that in a few days they should be satisfied. But the delay has brought matters to such a crisis, as admits of no farther uncertain expectations. I have therefore sent off this express with orders to make all possible despatch. It is my most earnest request, that he may be returned with all possible expedition, unless the honorable Congress have already forwarded what is so indispensably necessary. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO JOSEPH REED.

CAMBRIDGE, 28 November, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

* * * What an astonishing thing it is, that

those who are employed to sign the Continental bills should not be able, or inclined, to do it as fast as they are wanted. They will prove the destruction of the army, if they are not more attentive and diligent. Such a dearth of public spirit, and want of virtue, such stock-jobbing, and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and pray God I may never be witness to again. What will be the ultimate end of these manœuvres is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. We have been till this time enlisting about three thousand five hundred men. To engage these I have been obliged to allow furloughs as far as fifty men a regiment, and the officers I am persuaded indulge as many more. The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term (saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign, and mostly on furlough), and such a dirty, mercenary spirit pervades the whole, that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen. In short, after the last of this month our lines will be so weakened, that the minute-men and militia must be called in for their defence; these, being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy the little subordination I have been laboring to establish, and run me into one evil whilst I am endeavoring to avoid another; but the lesser must be chosen. Could I have foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command. A regi-

ment or any subordinate department would have been accompanied with ten times the satisfaction, and perhaps the honor.[1] * * *

TO JOSEPH REED.

CAMBRIDGE, 14 January, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

The bearer presents an opportunity to me of acknowledging the receipt of your favor of the 30th ultimo, (which never came to my hands till last night,) and, if I have not done it before, of your other of the 23d preceding.

[1] "I am very sorry to be necessitated to mention to you the egregious want of public spirit, which reigns here [Massachusetts]. Instead of pressing to be engaged in the cause of their country, which I vainly flattered myself would be the case, I find we are likely to be deserted, and in a most critical time. Those that have enlisted must have a furlough, which I have been obliged to grant to fifty at a time, from each regiment. The Connecticut troops, upon whom I reckoned, are as backward, indeed, if possible, more so than the people of this colony. Our situation is truly alarming; and of this General Howe is well apprized, it being the common topic of conversation, when the people left Boston last Friday. No doubt, when he is reinforced, he will avail himself of the information." —*Washington to the President of Congress*, 28 November, 1775.

"His Excellency is a great and good man. I feel the highest degree of respect for him. I wish him immortal honor. I think myself happy in an opportunity to serve under so good a general. My happiness will be still greater if fortune gives me an opportunity to contribute to his glory and my country's good. But his Excellency, as you observe, has not had time to make himself acquainted with the genius of this people. They are naturally as brave and spirited as the peasantry of any other country; but you cannot expect veterans of a raw militia of only a few months' service. The common people are exceedingly avaricious; the genius of the people is commercial, from their long intercourse with trade. The sentiment of

The hints you have communicated from time to time not only deserve, but do most sincerely and cordially meet with my thanks. You cannot render a more acceptable service, nor in my estimation give a more convincing proof of your friendship, than by a free, open, and undisguised account of every matter relative to myself or conduct. I can bear to hear of imputed or real errors. The man, who wishes to stand well in the opinion of others, must do this; because he is thereby enabled to correct his faults, or remove prejudices which are imbibed against him. For this reason, I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world, upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for, as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind, as far as I can consistently; I mean, without departing from that great line of duty, which, though hid under a cloud for some time, from a peculiarity of circumstances, may nevertheless bear a scrutiny. My constant attention to the great and perplexing objects, which continually rise to my view, absorbs all lesser

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honor, the true characteristic of a soldier, has not yet got the better of interest. His Excellency has been taught to believe the people here a superior race of mortals; and finding them of the same temper and dispositions, passions and prejudices, virtues and vices of the common people of other governments, they sink in his esteem. The country round here set no bounds to their demand for hay, wood and teaming. It has given his Excellency a great deal of uneasiness that they should take this opportunity to extort from the necessities of the army such enormous prices."—*General Greene to Henry Ward*, 18 December, 1775.

considerations, and indeed scarcely allows me time to reflect, that there is such a body in existence as the General Court of this colony,[1] but when I am reminded of it by a committee; nor can I, upon recollection, discover in what instances (I wish they would be more explicit) I have been inattentive to, or slighted them. They could not, surely, conceive that there was a propriety in unbosoming the secrets of an army to them; that it was necessary to ask their opinion of throwing up an intrenchment, forming a battalion, &c., &c. It must, therefore, be what I before hinted to you; and how to remedy it I hardly know, as I am acquainted with few of the members, never go out of my own lines, or see any of them in them.

I am exceeding sorry to hear, that your little fleet has been shut in by the frost. I hope it has sailed ere this, and given you some proof of the utility of it, and enabled the Congress to bestow a little more attention to the affairs of this army, which suffers exceedingly by their overmuch business, or too little attention to it. We are now without any money in our treasury, powder in our magazines, arms in our stores. We are without a brigadier (the want of which has been twenty times urged), engineers, expresses (though a committee has been appointed these two months to establish them), and by and by, when we shall be called upon to take the field, shall not have a tent to lie in. Apropos, what is doing with mine?

[1] The legislature of Massachusetts is called the General Court.

These are evils, but small in comparison of those, which disturb my present repose. Our enlistments are at a stand; the fears I ever entertained are realized; that is, the discontented officers (for I do not know how else to account for it) have thrown such difficulties or stumbling-blocks in the way of recruiting, that I no longer entertain a hope of completing the army by voluntary enlistments, and I see no move or likelihood of one, to do it by other means. In the last two weeks we have enlisted but about a thousand men; whereas I was confidently bid to believe, by all the officers I conversed with, that we should by this time have had the regiments nearly completed. Our total number upon paper amounts to about ten thousand five hundred; but as a large portion of these are returned not joined, I never expect to receive them, as an ineffectual order has once issued to call them in. Another is now gone forth, peremptorily requiring all officers under pain of being cashiered, and recruits as being treated as deserters, to join their respective regiments by the 1st day of next month, that I may know my real strength; but if my fears are not imaginary, I shall have a dreadful account of the advanced month's pay. In consequence of the assurances given, and my expectation of having at least men enough enlisted to defend our lines, to which may be added my unwillingness of burthening the cause with unnecessary expense, no relief of militia has been ordered in, to supply the places of those, who are released from their engagements to-morrow, and on whom, though many have prom-

ised to continue out the month, there is no security for their stay.

Thus am I situated with respect to men. With regard to arms I am yet worse off. Before the dissolution of the old army, I issued an order directing three judicious men of each brigade to attend, review, and appraise the good arms of every regiment; and finding a very great unwillingness in the men to part with their arms, at the same time not having it in my power to pay them for the months of November and December, I threatened severely, that every soldier, who carried away his firelock without leave, should never receive pay for those months; yet so many have been carried off, partly by stealth, but chiefly as condemned, that we have not at this time one hundred guns in the stores, of all that have been taken in the prize-ship and from the soldiery, notwithstanding our regiments are not half complete. At the same time I am told, and believe it, that to restrain the enlistment to men with arms, you will get but few of the former, and still fewer of the latter, which would be good for any thing.

How to get furnished I know not. I have applied to this and the neighboring colonies, but with what success time only can tell. The reflection on my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts; fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what causes it flows. I have often thought how much

happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket on my shoulder and entered the ranks, or, if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these and many other difficulties, which might be enumerated, I shall most religiously believe, that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies; for surely if we get well through this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labor under.

Could I have foreseen the difficulties, which have come upon us; could I have known, that such a backwardness would have been discovered in the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say; but thus much I will answer for, that no opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes. But as this letter discloses some interesting truths, I shall be somewhat uneasy until I hear it gets to your hands, although the conveyance is thought safe. * * *

TO JOSEPH REED.

CAMBRIDGE, 10 February, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

Your obliging favors of the 28th ult. and 1st

inst. are now before me, and claim my particular thanks for the polite attention you pay to my wishes in an early and regular communication of what is passing in your quarter.

If you conceive, that I took any thing wrong, or amiss, that was conveyed in any of your former letters, you are really mistaken. I only meant to convince you, that nothing would give more real satisfaction, than to know the sentiments, which are entertained of me by the public, whether they be favorable or otherwise; and I urged as a reason, that the man, who wished to steer clear of shelves and rocks, must know where they lay. I know—but to declare it, unless to a friend, may be an argument of vanity—the integrity of my own heart. I know the unhappy predicament I stand in; I know that much is expected of me; I know, that without men, without arms, without ammunition, without any thing fit for the accommodation of a soldier, little is to be done; and, which is mortifying, I know, that I cannot stand justified to the world without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause, by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them.

If, under these disadvantages, I am able to keep above water, (as it were) in the esteem of mankind, I shall feel myself happy; but if, from the unknown peculiarity of my circumstances, I suffer in the opinion of the world, I shall not think you take the freedom of a friend, if you conceal the reflections that may be cast upon my conduct. My own situa-

tion feels so irksome to me at times, that, if I did not consult the public good, more than my own tranquillity, I should long ere this have put every thing to the cast of a Dye. So far from my having an army of twenty thousand men well armed, I have been here with less than half of it, including sick, furloughed, and on command, and those neither armed nor clothed, as they should be. In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers. The Congress, as you observe, expect, I believe, that I should do more than others,—for whilst they compel me to inlist men without a bounty, they give 40 to others, which will, I expect, put a stand to our Inlistments; for notwithstanding all the publick virtue which is ascrib'd to these people, there is no nation under the sun, (that I ever came across) pay greater adoration to money than they do—I am pleas'd to find that your Battalions are cloathed and look well, and that they are filing off for Canada. I wish I could say that the troops here had altered much in Dress or appearance. Our regiments are little more than half compleat, and recruiting nearly at a stand—In all my letters I fail not to mention of Tents, and now perceive that notice is taken of yr. application. I have been convinced, by General Howe's conduct, that he has either been very ignorant of our situation (which I do not believe) or that he has received positive orders (which, I think, is natural to conclude) not to put anything to the hazard till his reinforcements arrive; otherwise there has [not]

been a time since the first of December, that we must have fought like men to have maintained these Lines, so great in their extent.

The party to Bunker's Hill had some good and some bad men engaged in it. One or two courts have been held on the conduct of part of it. To be plain, these people—among friends—are not to be depended upon if exposed; and any man will fight well if he thinks himself in no danger. I do not apply this only to these people. I suppose it to be the case with all raw and undisciplined troops. You may rely upon it, that transports left Boston six weeks ago with troops; where they are gone, unless driven to the West Indies, I know not. You may also rely upon General Clinton's sailing from Boston about three weeks ago, with about four or five hundred men; his destination I am also a stranger to. I am sorry to hear of the failures you speak of from France. But why will not Congress forward part of the powder made in your province? They seem to look upon this as the season for action, but will not furnish the means. I will not blame them. I dare say the demands upon them are greater than they can supply. The cause must be starved till our resources are greater, or more certain within ourselves.

With respect to myself, I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation, since I heard of the measures, which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight.[1] The King's speech has

[1] "I cannot sufficiently express my sensibility for your kind congratulations on the favorable termination of the War, and

confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair; and, if every man was of my mind, the ministers of Great Britain should know, in a few words, upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations, nor specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly terms proclaim our wrongs, and our resolution to be redressed. I would tell them, that we had borne much, that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honorable terms, that it had been denied us, that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented, that we had done everything which could be expected from the best of subjects, that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit to slavery, and that, if nothing else could satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we are determined to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under covert, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness. * * *

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for the flattering manner in which you are pleased to speak of my instrumentality in effecting a revolution, which I can truly aver, was not in the beginning premeditated; but the result of dire necessity brought about by the persecuting spirit of the British Government. This no man can speak to with more certainty, or assert upon better grounds than myself—as I was a member of Congress in the Councils of America till the affair at Bunker Hill, and was an attentive observer and witness to those interesting and painful struggles for accomodation, and redress of grievances in a Constitutional way, which all the world saw and must have approved, except the ignorant, deluded and designing."—*Washington to George William Fairfax*, 10 July, 1783.

TO JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON.

CAMBRIDGE, 31 March, 1776.

DEAR BROTHER,

* * * The want of arms and powder is not peculiar to Virginia. This country of which doubtless you have heard large and flattering accounts, is more deficient in both than you can conceive. I have been here months together, with (what will scarcely be believed) not thirty rounds of musket cartridges to a man; and have been obliged to submit to all the insults of the enemy's cannon for want of powder, keeping what little we had for pistol distance. Another thing has been done, which, added to the above, will put it in the power of this army to say, what perhaps no other with justice ever could say. We have maintained our ground against the enemy, under this want of powder, and we have disbanded one army, and recruited another, within musket-shot of two and twenty regiments, the flower of the British army, whilst our force has been but little if any superior to theirs; and, at last, have beaten them into a shameful and precipitate retreat out of a place the strongest by nature on this continent, and strengthened and fortified at an enormous expense.

As some account of the late manœuvres of both armies may not be unacceptable, I shall, hurried as I always am, devote a little time to it. Having received a small supply of powder, very inadequate to our wants, I resolved to take possession of Dorchester Point, lying east of Boston, looking di-

rectly into it, and commanding the enemy's lines on Boston Neck. To do this, which I knew would force the enemy to an engagement, or subject them to be enfiladed by our cannon, it was necessary, in the first instance, to possess two heights (those mentioned in General Burgoyne's letter to Lord Stanley, in his account of the battle of Bunker's Hill), which had the entire command of the point. The ground at this point being frozen upwards of two feet deep, and as impenetrable as a rock, nothing could be attempted with earth. We were obliged, therefore, to provide an amazing quantity of chandeliers and fascines for the work; and, on the night of the 4th, after a previous severe cannonade and bombardment for three nights together, to divert the enemy's attention from our real design, we removed every material to the spot, under cover of darkness, and took full possession of those heights, without the loss of a single man.

Upon their discovery of the works next morning, great preparations were made for attacking them; but not being ready before the afternoon, and the weather getting very tempestuous, much blood was saved, and a very important blow, to one side or the other, was prevented. That this most remarkable interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have not a doubt. But, as the principal design of the manœuvre was to draw the enemy to an engagement under disadvantages to them, as a premeditated plan was laid for this purpose, and seemed to be succeeding to my utmost wish, and as no men seem better disposed to make

the appeal than ours did upon that occasion, I can scarcely forbear lamenting the disappointment, unless the dispute is drawing to an accommodation, and the sword going to be sheathed. But, to return, the enemy thinking, as we have since learnt, that we had got too securely posted, before the second morning, to be much hurt by them, and apprehending great annoyance from our new works, resolved upon a retreat, and accordingly on the 17th embarked in as much hurry, precipitation, and confusion, as ever troops did, not taking time to fit their transports, but leaving the King's property in Boston, to the amount, as is supposed, of thirty or forty thousand pounds in provisions and stores. Many pieces of cannon, some mortars, and a number of shot and shells are also left; and baggage-wagons and artillery-carts, which they have been eighteen months preparing to take the field with, were found destroyed, thrown into the docks, and drifted upon every shore. In short, Dunbar's destruction of stores after General Braddock's defeat, which made so much noise, affords but a faint idea of what was to be met with here.

The enemy lay from the 17th to the 27th in Nantasket and King's Roads, about nine miles from Boston, to take in water from the islands thereabouts, and to prepare themselves for sea. Whither they are now bound, and where their tents will be next pitched, I know not; but, as New York and Hudson's River are the most important objects they can have in view, as the latter secures the communication with Canada, at the same time that it

separates the northern and southern colonies, and the former is thought to abound in disaffected persons, who only wait a favorable opportunity and support to declare themselves openly, it becomes equally important for us to prevent their gaining possession of these advantages; and, therefore, as soon as they embarked, I detached a brigade of six regiments to that government, and, when they sailed, another brigade composed of the same number; and to-morrow another brigade of five regiments will march. In a day or two more, I shall follow myself, and be in New York ready to receive all but the first.

The enemy left all their works standing in Boston and on Bunker's Hill; and formidable they are. The town has shared a much better fate than was expected, the damage done to the houses being nothing equal to report. But the inhabitants have suffered a good deal, in being plundered by the soldiery at their departure. All those who took upon themselves the style and title of government-men in Boston, in short, all those who have acted an unfriendly part in the great contest, have shipped themselves off in the same hurry, but under still greater disadvantages than the King's troops, being obliged to man their own vessels, as seamen enough could not be had for the King's transports, and submit to every hardship that can be conceived. One or two have done, what a great number ought to have done long ago, committed suicide. By all accounts, there never existed a more miserable set of beings, than these wretched creatures now are.

Taught to believe, that the power of Great Britain was superior to all opposition, and, if not, that foreign aid was at hand, they were even higher and more insulting in their opposition than the regulars. When the order issued, therefore, for embarking the troops in Boston, no electric shock, no sudden explosion of thunder, in a word, not the last trump could have struck them with greater consternation. They were at their wits' end, and, conscious of their black ingratitude, they chose to commit themselves, in the manner I have above described, to the mercy of the waves at a tempestuous season, rather than meet their offended countrymen.

I believe I may with great truth affirm, that no man perhaps since the first institution of armies ever commanded one under more difficult circumstances, than I have done. To enumerate the particulars would fill a volume. Many of my difficulties and distresses were of so peculiar a cast, that, in order to conceal them from the enemy, I was obliged to conceal them from my friends, and indeed from my own army, thereby subjecting my conduct to interpretations unfavorable to my character, especially by those at a distance, who could not in the smallest degree be acquainted with the springs that governed it. I am happy, however, to find, and to hear from different quarters, that my reputation stands fair, that my conduct hitherto has given universal satisfaction. The addresses, which I have received, and which I suppose will be published, from the General Court of this colony, and from the selectmen of Boston upon the

evacuation of the town, and my approaching departure from the colony, exhibit a pleasing testimony of their approbation of my conduct, and of their personal regard, which I have found in various other instances, and which, in retirement, will afford many comfortable reflections.

The share you have taken in the public disputes is commendable and praiseworthy. It is a duty we owe our country; a claim which posterity has upon us. It is not sufficient for a man to be a passive friend and well-wisher to the cause. This, and every other cause of such a nature, must inevitably perish under such an opposition. Every person should be active in some department or other, without paying too much attention to private interest. It is a great stake we are playing for, and sure we are of winning, if the cards are well managed. Inactivity in some, disaffection in others, and timidity in many, may hurt the cause. Nothing else can; for unanimity will carry us through triumphantly, in spite of every exertion of Great Britain, if we are linked together in one indissoluble bond. This the leaders know, and they are practising every stratagem to divide us, and unite their own people. Upon this principle it is, that the restraining bill is passed, and commissioners are coming over. The device, to be sure, is shallow, the covering thin, but they will hold out to their own people, that the acts complained of are repealed, and commissioners sent to each colony to treat with us, and that we will attend to neither of them. This, upon weak minds among

us, will have its effect. They wish for reconciliation; or, in other words, they wish for peace without attending to the conditions.

General [Charles] Lee, I suppose, is with you before this. He is the first officer, in military knowledge and experience, we have in the whole army. He is zealously attached to the cause, honest and well-meaning, but rather fickle and violent, I fear, in his temper. However, as he possesses an uncommon share of good sense and spirit, I congratulate my countrymen upon his appointment to that department. As I am now nearly at the end of my eighth page, I think it time to conclude; especially, as I set out with prefacing the little time I had for friendly correspondences. I shall only add, therefore, my affectionate regards to my sister and the children, and compliments to friends; and that I am, with every sentiment of true affection, your loving brother and faithful friend.

TO JOSEPH REED.

CAMBRIDGE, 1 April, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

* * * The accounts brought by Mr. Temple, of the favorable disposition in the Ministry to accommodate matters, does not correspond with their speeches in Parliament;—how then does he account for their inconsistency? If the commissioners do not come over with full and ample powers to treat with Congress, I sincerely wish they may

never put their feet on American ground, as it must be self-evident, (in the other case,) that they come over with insidious intentions; to distract, divide, and create as much confusion as possible; how then can any man, let his passion for reconciliation be never so strong, be so blinded and misled, as to embrace a measure evidently designed for his destruction? No man does, no man can, wish the restoration of peace more fervently than I do, but I hope, whenever made, it will be upon such terms, as will reflect honor upon the councils and wisdom of America. With you, I think a change in the American representation necessary; frequent appeals to the people can be attended with no bad, but may have very salutary effects. My countrymen I know, from their form of government, and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of independence, but time and persecution bring many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters, which I have lately received from Virginia, I find " Common Sense " is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men. * * *[1]

[1] Thomas Paine's notable pamphlet, *Common Sense*, " the first open and unqualified argument in championship of the doctrine of American Independence," was published in Philadelphia in January, 1776. Its author, curiously enough, was an Englishman who had been in America less than fifteen months. The pamphlet appeared anonymously and was commonly ascribed to Benjamin Franklin. On one occasion a Loyalist lady is said to have reproved him for having in the pamphlet referred to George III. as " the royal brute of Britain." " Madam," said Franklin, " let me assure you that I did not write *Common Sense*. Moreover, if I had written it, I would not so have dishonored—the brute creation." An ex-

TO JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 31 May, 1776.

DEAR BROTHER,

* * * I am very glad to find that the Virginia Convention have passed so noble a vote, and with so much unanimity.[1] Things have come to that pass now, as to convince us, that we have nothing more to expect from the justice of Great Britain; also, that she is capable of the most delusive arts; for I am satisfied, that no commissioners ever were designed, except Hessians and other foreigners; and that the idea was only to deceive and throw us off our guard. The first has been too effectually accomplished, as many members of Congress, in short, the representation of whole provinces, are still feeding themselves upon the dainty food of reconciliation; and, though they will not allow, that the expectation of it has any influence upon their judgment, (with respect to their preparations for defence,) it is but too obvious, that it has an

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cellent account of the pamphlet and its influence is given in Tyler, *The Literary History of the American Revolution*, i., 451-474.

[1] On Wednesday, May 15th, the Virginia Convention, consisting of one hundred and twelve members, resolved unanimously to instruct their delegates in the Continental Congress to propose "to that respectable body to declare the Colonies free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain," pledging their support to such a declaration, and "to whatever measures may be thought proper and necessary by the Congress for forming foreign alliances, and a confederation of the colonies, at such time, and in the manner, as to them shall seem best: Provided, that the power of forming government for, and the regulation of the internal concerns of each colony, be left to the respective colonial legislatures."—*Ford.*

operation upon every part of their conduct, and is a clog to their proceedings. It is not in the nature of things to be otherwise; for no man, that entertains a hope of seeing this dispute speedily and equitably adjusted by commissioners, will go to the same expense and run the same hazards to prepare for the worst event, as he who believes that he must conquer, or submit to unconditional terms, and its concomitants, such as confiscation, hanging, &c., &c.

To form a new government requires infinite care and unbounded attention; for if the foundation is badly laid, the superstructure must be bad. Too much time, therefore, cannot be bestowed in weighing and digesting matters well. We have, no doubt, some good parts in our present constitution; many bad ones we know we have. Wherefore, no time can be misspent that is employed in separating the wheat from the tares. My fear is, that you will all get tired and homesick; the consequence of which will be, that you will patch up some kind of a constitution as defective as the present. This should be avoided. Every man should consider, that he is lending his aid to frame a constitution, which is to render millions happy or miserable, and that a matter of such moment cannot be the work of a day. * * *

TO JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON

HEIGHTS OF HAERLEM, 22 September, 1776.

DEAR BROTHER,

My extream hurry for some time past has ren-

dered it utterly impossible for me to pay that attention to the letters of my friends, which inclination and natural affection always inclines me to. I have no doubt, therefore, of meeting with their excuse, tho' with respect to yourself I have had no Letter from you since the date of my last saving the one of Septr. the 1st. With respect to the attack and Retreat from Long Island, the public Papers would furnish you with accounts nearly true. I shall only add, that in the former we lost about eight hundred men, more than three fourths of which were taken prisoners. This misfortune happened in a great measure by Two detachments of our People, who were Posted in two Roads leading thro' a wood, in order to intercept the Enemy in their march, suffering a Surprise, and making a precipitate Retreat, which enabled the Enemy to lead a great part of their force against the Troops commanded by Lord Stirling, who formed a third detachment, who behaved with great bravery and resolution.

As to the Retreat from the Island, under the circumstances we then were, it became absolutely necessary, and was effected without loss of men, and with but very little baggage. A few heavy cannon were left, not being movable on account of the Ground being soft and miry, Thro' the heavy and incessant rains which had fallen. The Enemy's loss in killed we could never ascertain, but have many reasons to believe, that it was pretty considerable, and exceeded ours a good deal. Our Retreat from thence, as I said before, was absolutely

necessary, the Enemy having landed the main body of their army to attack us in Front, while their ships of war were to cut off all communication with the city, from whence resources of men and provisions were to be drawn.[1]

Having made this Retreat, not long after we discovered, by the movements of the Enemy and the information we received from Deserters and others, that they declined attacking our Lines in the city, and were forming a plan to get in our Rear with their Land army, by crossing the Sound above us, and thereby to cut off all Intercourse with the country and every necessary supply. The ships of war were to coöperate, possess the North River, and prevent succours from the Jerseys, &c. This Plan appearing probable, and but too practicable in its execution, it became necessary to guard agt. the fatal consequences, that must follow, if the scheme were effected; for which purpose I caused a removal of a part of our troops and stores from the city; and a council of general officers determined, that it must be entirely abandoned, as we had, with an army weaker than theirs, a line of sixteen or eighteen miles to defend, to keep open our communication with the country, besides the defence of the city. We held up, however, every show of defence, till our Sick and all our stores could be brought away. The evacuation being resolved upon, every exertion in our power was made to baffle their designs and effect our own. The

[1] General Greene described the retreat as "the best effected retreat I ever heard or read of, considering the difficulties."

sick were numerous, amounting to more than the fourth part of our whole army, and an object of great Importance. Happily we got them away; but, before we could bring off all our stores, on Sunday morning six or seven ships of war, which had gone up the East River some few days before, began a most severe and heavy cannonade, to scour the grounds and effect a landing of their Troops. Three Ships of War also ran up the North River that morning above the city, to prevent our Boats and small craft from carrying away our Baggage, &c.

I had gone the Evening before to the main body of our army, which was Posted about these Heights and the Plains of Haerlem, where it seemed probable, from the movements and disposition of the Enemy, they meant to Land and make an attack the next morning. However the Event did not happen. Immediately on hearing the cannonade, I rode with all possible expedition towards the place of Landing, and where Breastworks had been thrown up to secure our men; and found the Troops, that had been posted there, to my great surprise and mortification, and those ordered to their support, (consisting of Eight Regiments) notwithstanding the exertions of their Generals to form them, running away in the most shameful and disgraceful manner. I used every possible effort to rally them, but to no purpose; and, on the appearance of a small part of the Enemy, (not more than sixty or seventy,) they ran off without firing a Single Gun. Many of our heavy cannon

would inevitably have fallen into the Enemy's hands, as they landed so soon; but this scandalous conduct occasioned a loss of many Tents, Baggage, and Camp-equipage, which would have been easily secured, had they made the least opposition.

The Retreat was made with the loss of a few men only. We Encamped, and still are, on the Heights of Haerlem, which are well suited for Defence against their approaches. On Monday morning, they advanced in sight in several large bodies, but attempted nothing of a general nature, tho' there were smart skirmishes between their advanced parties and some Detachments from our lines, which I sent out. In these our Troops behaved well, putting the enemy to flight in open Ground, and forcing them from Posts they had seized two or three times. A sergeant, who deserted from them, says they had, as he was told, eighty-nine wounded and missing, besides slain; but other accounts make the wounded much greater. Our loss in killed and wounded was about sixty; but the greatest loss we sustained was in the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Knowlton, a brave and gallant officer. Major Leitch of Weedon's Regiment had three balls through his side, and behaved exceedingly well. He is in a fair way of recovery. Nothing material has happened since this. The Enemy, it is said, are bringing up their heavy cannon, so that we are to expect another attack soon, both by Land and Water, as we are upon the Hudson, (or North River) at the place where we have attempted

to stop the navigation by sinking obstructions in the river and erecting Batteries.

The Dependence, which the Congress have placed upon the militia, has already greatly injured, and I fear will totally ruin our cause. Being subject to no controul themselves, they introduce disorder among the troops, whom you have attempted to discipline, while the change in their living brings on sickness; this makes them Impatient to get home, which spreads universally, and introduces abominable desertions. In short, it is not in the power of words to describe the task I have to act. Fifty thousand pounds should not induce me again to undergo what I have done. Our numbers, by sickness, desertion, &c., are greatly reduced.[1] I have been trying these four or five days to get a return, but have not yet succeeded. I am sure, however, we have not more than twelve or fourteen thousand men fit for duty, whilst the enemy, who, it is said, are very healthy, cannot have less than near twenty-five thousand. With sincere love to my sister and the family, and compliments to any inquiring friends, I am, &c.

[1] "The thirteen militia regiments from Connecticut being reduced to a little more than 700 men, rank and file, fit for duty, I have thought proper to discharge the whole to save the States the immense charge that would arise for officers' pay. There are, too, many militia that have just come in and on their way from that State, none of which are provided with a tent or a single camp utensil. This distresses me beyond measure." —*Washington to the President of Congress*, 24 September, 1776.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

COLO. MORRIS'S, ON THE HEIGHTS OF HAERLEM,
24 September, 1776.

SIR,

From the hours allotted to sleep, I will borrow a few moments to convey my thoughts on sundry important matters to Congress. I shall offer them with the sincerity, which ought to characterize a man of candor, and with the freedom, which may be used in giving useful information without incurring the imputation of presumption.

We are now, as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of our army.[1] The remembrance of the difficulties, which happened upon that occasion last year, and the consequences, which might have followed the change if proper advantages had been taken by the enemy, added to a knowledge of the present temper and situation of the troops, reflect but a very gloomy prospect in the appearances of things now, and satisfy me beyond the possibility of doubt, that, unless some speedy and effectual measures are adopted by Congress, our cause will be lost. It is in vain to expect, that any more than a trifling part of this army will again engage in the service on the encouragement offered by Congress. When men find that their townsmen and companions are receiving twenty, thirty, and more dollars for a few months' service, which is truly the case, it cannot be expected, without using compulsion; and to force them into the service would

[1] The term of service for almost the whole army was to expire at or before the end of the year.—*Sparks.*

answer no valuable purpose. When men are irritated, and their passions inflamed, they fly hastily and cheerfully to arms; but, after the first emotions are over, to expect among such people as compose the bulk of an army, that they are influenced by any other principles than those of interest, is to look for what never did, and I fear never will happen; the Congress will deceive themselves, therefore, if they expect it. A soldier, reasoned with upon the goodness of the cause he is engaged in, and the inestimable rights he is contending for, hears you with patience, and acknowledges the truth of your observations, but adds that it is of no more importance to him than to others. The officer makes you the same reply, with this further remark, that his pay will not support him, and he cannot ruin himself and family to serve his country, when every member of the community is equally interested, and benefited by his labors. The few, therefore, who act upon principles of disinterestedness, comparatively speaking, are no more than a drop in the ocean.

It becomes evident to me then, that, as this contest is not likely to be the work of a day, as the war must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have good officers, there are in my judgment no other possible means to obtain them but by establishing your army upon a permanent footing, and giving your officers good pay. This will induce gentlemen and men of character to engage; and, till the bulk of your officers is composed of such persons as are actuated by principles of

honor and a spirit of enterprise, you have little to expect from them. They ought to have such allowances, as will enable them to live like and support the character of gentlemen, and not be driven by a scanty pittance to the low and dirty arts, which many of them practise, to filch from the public more than the difference of pay would amount to, upon an ample allowance. Besides, something is due to the man, who puts his life in your hands, hazards his health, and forsakes the sweets of domestic enjoyment. Why a captain in the Continental service should receive no more than five shillings currency per day for performing the same duties, that an officer of the same rank in the British service receives ten shillings for, I never could conceive; especially when the latter is provided with every necessary he requires upon the best terms, and the former can scarce procure them at any rate. There is nothing that gives a man consequence and renders him fit for command, like a support that renders him independent of every body but the state he serves.[1]

With respect to the men, nothing but a good bounty can obtain them upon a permanent establishment; and for no shorter time, than the continuance of the war, ought they to be engaged; as facts incontestably prove, that the difficulty and cost of enlistments increase with time. When the army was first raised at Cambridge, I am per-

[1] "Our soldiers are as good as ever were; and were the officers half as good as the men, they would beat any army on the globe of equal numbers."—*General Greene*, 28 September, 1776.

suaded the men might have been got, without a bounty, for the war. After this, they began to see that the contest was not likely to end so speedily as was imagined, and to feel their consequence by remarking, that, to get in their militia in the course of the last year, many towns were induced to give them a bounty. Foreseeing the evils resulting from this, and the destructive consequences, which unavoidably would follow short enlistments, I took the liberty in a long letter written by myself (date not now recollected as my Letter Book is not here) to recommend the enlistments for and during the war, assigning such reasons for it as experience has since convinced me were well founded. At that time, twenty dollars would, I am persuaded, have engaged the men for this term. But it will not do to look back; and, if the present opportunity is slipped, I am persuaded that twelve months more will increase our difficulties fourfold. I shall therefore take the freedom of giving it as my opinion, that a good bounty should be immediately offered, aided by the proffer of at least a hundred or a hundred and fifty acres of land, and a suit of clothes and blanket to each non-comissioned officer and soldier; as I have good authority for saying, that, however high the men's pay may appear, it is barely sufficient, in the present scarcity and dearness of all kinds of goods, to keep them in clothes, much less afford support to their families.

If this encouragement then is given to the men, and such pay allowed the officers as will induce gentlemen of character and liberal sentiments to

engage, and proper care and precaution are used in the nomination, (having more regard to the characters of persons, than to the number of men they can enlist,) we should in a little time have an army able to cope with any that can be opposed to it, as there are excellent materials to form one out of. But while the only merit an officer possesses is his ability to raise men, while those men consider and treat him as an equal, and, in the character of an officer, regard him no more than a broomstick, being mixed together as one common herd, no order nor discipline can prevail; nor will the officer ever meet with that respect, which is essentially necessary to due subordination.

To place any dependence upon militia is assuredly resting upon a broken staff. Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill, (which being followed by want of confidence in themselves, when opposed to troops regularly trained, disciplined, and appointed, superior in knowledge and superior in arms,) makes them timid and ready to fly from their own shadows. Besides the sudden change in their manner of living, (particularly in the lodging,) brings on sickness in many, impatience in all, and such an unconquerable desire of returning to their respective homes, that it not only produces shameful and scandalous desertions among themselves, but infuses the like spirit in others. Again, men accustomed to unbounded freedom and no control cannot brooke the restraint, which is indispen-

sably necessary to the good order and government of an army; without which, licentiousness and every kind of disorder triumphantly reign. To bring men to a proper degree of subordination is not the work of a day, a month, or even a year; and, unhappily for us and the cause we are engaged in, the little discipline I have been laboring to establish in the army under my immediate command is in a manner done away, by having such a mixture of troops, as have been called together within these few months.

Relaxed and as unfit as our rules and regulations of war are for the government of an army, the militia (those properly so called, for of these we have two sorts, the six-months' men, and those sent in as a temporary aid) do not think themselves subject to them, and therefore take liberties, which the soldier is punished for. This creates jealousy; jealousy begets dissatisfaction; and these by degrees ripen into mutiny, keeping the whole army in a confused and disordered state, rendering the time of those, who wish to see regularity and good order prevail, more unhappy than words can describe. Besides this, such repeated changes take place, that all arrangement is set at nought, and the constant fluctuation of things deranges every plan as fast as adopted.

These, Sir, Congress may be assured, are but a small part of the inconveniences, which might be enumerated, and attributed to militia; but there is one, that merits particular attention, and that is the expense. Certain I am, that it would be

cheaper to keep fifty or a hundred thousand in constant pay, than to depend upon half the number and supply the other half occasionally by militia. The time the latter are in pay before and after they are in camp, assembling and marching, the waste of ammunition, the consumption of stores, which, in spite of every resolution or requisition of Congress, they must be furnished with, or sent home, added to other incidental expenses consequent upon their coming and conduct in camp, surpasses all idea, and destroys every kind of regularity and economy, which you could establish among fixed and settled troops, and will, in my opinion, prove, if the scheme is adhered to, the ruin of our cause.

The jealousy of a standing army, and the evils to be apprehended from one, are remote, and, in my judgment, situated and circumstanced as we are, not at all to be dreaded; but the consequence of wanting one, according to my ideas formed from the present view of things, is certain and inevitable ruin. For, if I was called upon to declare upon oath, whether the militia have been most serviceable or hurtful upon the whole, I should subscribe to the latter. I do not mean by this, however, to arraign the conduct of Congress; in so doing I should equally condemn my own measures, if I did not my judgment; but experience, which is the best criterion to work by, so fully, clearly, and decisively reprobates the practice of trusting to militia, that no man, who regards order, regularity, and economy, or who has any regard for his own honor,

character, or peace of mind, will risk them upon this issue.

No less attention should be paid to the choice of surgeons, than of other officers of the army. They should undergo a regular examination, and, if not appointed by the director-general and surgeons of the hospital, they ought to be subordinate to and governed by his directions. The regimental surgeons I am speaking of, many of whom are very great rascals, countenancing the men in sham complaints to exempt them from duty, and often receiving bribes to certify indispositions, with a view to procure discharges or furloughs; but, independent of these practices, while they are considered as unconnected with the general hospital, there will be nothing but continual complaints of each other; the director of the hospital charging them with enormity in their drafts for the sick, and they him with the same for denying such things as are necessary. In short, there is a constant bickering among them, which tends greatly to the injury of the sick, and will always subsist till the regimental surgeons are made to look up to the director-general of the hospital as a superior. Whether this is the case in regular armies or not, I cannot undertake to say; but certain I am, there is a necessity for it in this, or the sick will suffer. The regimental surgeons are aiming, I am persuaded, to break up the general hospital, and have, in numberless instances, drawn for medicines and stores in the most profuse and extravagant manner for private purposes.

Another matter highly worthy of attention is,

that other rules and regulations may be adopted for the government of the army, than those now in existence; otherwise the army, but for the name, might as well be disbanded. For the most atrocious offences, one or two instances only excepted, a man receives no more than thirty-nine lashes; and these, perhaps, through the collusion of the officer, who is to see it inflicted, are given in such a manner as to become rather a matter of sport than punishment; but, when inflicted as they ought, many hardened fellows, who have been the subjects, have declared that, for a bottle of rum, they would undergo a second operation. It is evident, therefore, that this punishment is inadequate to many crimes it is assigned to. As a proof of it, thirty or forty soldiers will desert at a time, and of late a practice prevails (as you will see by my letter of the 22d) of the most alarming nature and which will, if it cannot be checked, prove fatal both to the country and army; I mean the infamous practice of plundering. For, under the idea of Tory property, or property that may fall into the hands of the enemy, no man is secure in his effects, and scarcely in his person. In order to get at them, we have several instances of people being frightened out of their houses, under pretence of those houses being ordered to be burnt, and this is done with a view of seizing the goods; nay, in order that the villany may be more effectually concealed, some houses have actually been burnt, to cover the theft. I have, with some others, used my utmost endeavors to stop this horrid practice; but under the present lust

after plunder, and want of laws to punish offenders, I might almost as well attempt to remove Mount Atlas. I have ordered instant corporal punishment upon every man, who passes our lines, or is seen with plunder, that the offenders might be punished for disobedience of orders; and enclose to you the proceedings of a court-martial held upon an officer [Ensign Matthew McCumber] who, with a party of men, had robbed a house a little beyond our lines of a number of valuable goods, among which (to show that nothing escapes) were four large pier looking-glasses, women's clothes, and other articles, which, one would think, could be of no earthly use to him. He was met by a major of brigade, [Box] who ordered him to return the goods, as taken contrary to general orders, which he not only peremptorily refused to do, but drew up his party, and swore he would defend them at the hazard of his life; on which I ordered him to be arrested and tried for plundering, disobedience of orders, and mutiny. For the result, I refer to the proceedings of the court, whose judgment appeared so exceedingly extraordinary,[1] that I ordered a reconsideration of the matter, upon which, and with the assistance of a fresh evidence, they made a shift to cashier him. I adduce this in-

[1] The court decided that the prisoner was "not guilty of plundering or of robbery, nor of mutiny, but that he is guilty of offering violence to and disobeying Major Box, his superior officer." He was sentenced to ask pardon of Major Box, and to be severely reprimanded at the head of his regiment. Washington had added "Note. It is to be observed that the men who were to share the plunder became the evidences for the prisoner."—*Ford.*

stance, to give some idea to Congress of the current sentiments and general run of the officers, which compose the present army; and to show how exceedingly necessary it is to be careful in the choice of the new set, even if it should take double the time to complete the levies.

An army formed of good officers moves like clock-work; but there is no situation upon earth less enviable, nor more distressing, than that person's, who is at the head of troops which are regardless of order and discipline, and who are unprovided with almost every necessary. In a word, the difficulties, which have for ever surrounded me since I have been in the service, and kept my mind constantly upon the stretch, the wounds, which my feelings as an officer have received by a thousand things, which have happened contrary to my expectation and wishes; the effect of my own conduct, and present appearance of things, so little pleasing to myself, as to render it a matter of no surprise to me if I should stand capitally censured by Congress; added to a consciousness of my inability to govern an army composed of such discordant parts, and under such a variety of intricate and perplexing circumstances;—induces not only a belief, but a thorough conviction in my mind, that it will be impossible, unless there is a thorough change in our military system, for me to conduct matters in such a manner as to give satisfaction to the public, which is all the recompense I aim at, or ever wished for. * * *

TO JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON.

HACKINSAC, 19 November, 1776.

DEAR BROTHER,

* * * It is a matter of great grief and surprise to me to find the different States so slow and inattentive to that essential business of levying their quotas of men. In ten days from this date, there will not be above two thousand men, if that number, of the fixed established regiments on this side of Hudson's River to oppose Howe's whole army, and very little more on the other to secure the eastern colonies and the important passes leading through the Highlands to Albany, and the country about the Lakes. In short, it is impossible for me, in the compass of a letter, to give you any idea of our situation, of my difficulties, and of the constant perplexities and mortifications I meet with, derived from the unhappy policy of short enlistments, and delaying them too long. Last fall, or winter, before the army, which was then to be raised, was set about, I represented in clear and explicit terms the evils, which would arise from short enlistments, the expense which must attend the raising an army every year, the futility of such an army when raised; and, if I had spoken with a prophetic spirit, I could not have foretold the evils with more accuracy than I did. All the year since, I have been pressing Congress to delay no time in engaging men upon such terms as would ensure success, telling them that the longer it was delayed the more difficult it would prove. But the meas-

ure was not commenced till it was too late to be effected, and then in such a manner, as to bid adieu to every hope of getting an army, from which any services are to be expected; the different States, without regard to the qualifications of an officer, quarelling about the appointments, and nominating such as are not fit to be shoe blacks, from the local attachments of this or that member of Assembly.

I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde motion of things, and I solemnly protest, that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds a year would not induce me to undergo what I do; and after all, perhaps, to lose my character, as it is impossible, under such a variety of distressing circumstances, to conduct matters agreeably to public expectation, or even to the expectation of those, who employ me, as they will not make proper allowances for the difficulties their own errors have occasioned. * * *[1]

[1] "A large part of the Jerseys have given every proof of disaffection that they can do, and this part of Pennsylvania are equally inimical. In short, your imagination can scarce extend to a situation more distressing than mine. Our only dependence now is upon the speedy enlistment of a new army. If this fails, I think the game will be pretty well up, as, from disaffection and want of spirit and fortitude, the inhabitants, instead of resistance, are offering submission and taking protection from Gen. Howe in Jersey."—*Washington to Lund Washington*, 17 December, 1776.

"But we are in a very disaffected part of the Province; and, between you and me, I think our affairs are in a very bad situation; not so much from the apprehension of General Howe's army, as from the defection of New York, Jerseys, and Pennsylvania. In short, the conduct of the Jerseys has been most Infamous. Instead of turning out to defend their country, &

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWTOWN,
27 December, 1776.

SIR,

I have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the success of an enterprise, which I had formed against a detachment of the enemy lying in Trenton, and which was executed yesterday morning. The evening of the 25th I ordered the troops intended for this service to parade back of McKonkey's Ferry, that they might begin to pass as soon as it grew dark, imagining we should be able to throw them all over, with the necessary artillery, by twelve o'clock, and that we might easily arrive at Trenton by five in the morning, the distance being about nine miles. But the quantity of ice,

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affording aid to our army, they are making their submissions as fast as they can. If the Jerseys had given us any support, we might have made a stand at Hackinsac, and after that at Brunswic; but the few militia, that were in arms, disbanded themselves & left the poor remains of our army to make the best we could of it."—*Washington to John Augustine Washington*, 18 December, 1776.

"Your collection of old clothes for the use of our army deserves my warmest thanks; they are of the greatest use, and shall be distributed where they are most wanted. I think if the Committee, or some proper persons, were appointed to go through the County of Bucks and make a collection of blankets, &c., in the manner you have done in Philadelphia, it would be better than doing it in a military way by me, for many people, who would be willing to contribute or sell, if asked to do so by their neighbors or acquaintances, feel themselves hurt when the demand is made, backed by an armed force. But I would at the same time remark that if any, who can spare without inconvenience, refuse to do it, I would immediately give proper assistance to take from them."—*Washington to the Pennsylvania Council of Safety*, 22 December, 1776.

made that night, impeded the passage of the boats so much, that it was three o'clock before the artillery could all be got over; and near four, before the troops took up their line of march. This made me despair of surprising the town, as I well knew we could not reach it before the day was fairly broke. But as I was certain there was no making a retreat without being discovered and harassed on repassing the river, I determined to push on at all events. I formed my detachment into two divisions, one to march by the lower or river road, the other by the upper or Pennington road. As the divisions had nearly the same distance to march, I ordered each of them, immediately upon forcing the outguards, to push directly into the town, that they might charge the enemy before they had time to form.

The upper division arrived at the enemy's advanced posts exactly at eight o'clock; and in three minutes after, I found, from the fire on the lower road, that the [other] division had also got up. The outguards made but small opposition, though, for their numbers, they behaved very well, keeping up a constant retreating fire from behind houses. We presently saw their main body formed; but, from their motions, they seemed undetermined how to act. Being hard pressed by our troops, who had already got possession of their artillery, they attempted to file off by a road on their right, leading to Princeton. But, perceiving their intention, I threw a body of troops in their way, which immediately checked them. Finding from our dis-

position, that they were surrounded, and that they must inevitably be cut to pieces if they made any further resistance, they agreed to lay down their arms. The number that submitted in this manner was twenty-three officers and eight hundred and eighty-six men. Colonel Rahl, the commanding officer, and seven others were found wounded in the town. I do not exactly know how many were killed; but I fancy not above twenty or thirty, as they never made any regular stand. Our loss is very trifling indeed, only two officers and one or two privates wounded.

I find that the detachment of the enemy consisted of the three Hessian regiments of Anspach, Kniphausen, and Rahl, amounting to about fifteen hundred men, and a troop of British light-horse; but immediately upon the beginning of the attack, all those, who were not killed or taken, pushed directly down the road towards Bordentown. These would likewise have fallen into our hands, could my plan have been completely carried into execution. General Ewing was to have crossed before day at Trenton Ferry, and taken possession of the bridge leading out of town; but the quantity of ice was so great, that, though he did everything in his power, to effect it, he could not get over. The difficulty also hindered General Cadwalader from crossing with the Pennsylvania militia from Bristol. He got part of his foot over; but, finding it impossible to embark his artillery, he was obliged to desist. I am fully confident, that, could the troops under Generals Ewing and Cadwalader have

passed the river, I should have been able with their assistance to drive the enemy from all their posts below Trenton. But the numbers I had with me being inferior to theirs below me, and a strong battalion of light infantry being at Princeton above me, I thought it most prudent to return the same evening with the prisoners and the artillery we had taken. We found no stores of any consequence in the town.

In justice to the officers and men, I must add, that their behavior upon this occasion reflects the highest honor upon them. The difficulty of passing the river in a very severe night, and their march through a violent storm of snow and hail, did not in the least abate their ardor; but, when they came to the charge, each seemed to vie with the other in pressing forward; and were I to give a preference to any particular corps, I should do great injustice to the others. Colonel Baylor, my first aid-de-camp, will have the honor of delivering this to you; and from him you may be made acquainted with many other particulars. His spirited behavior upon every occasion requires me to recommend him to your particular notice. I have the honor to be, &c.

P.S. Inclosed you have a particular list of the Prisoners, Artillery, and other stores.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PLUCKEMIN, 5 January, 1777.

SIR,

I have the honor to inform you, that, since the date of my last from Trenton, I have removed with the army under my command to this place. The difficulty of crossing the Delaware, on account of the ice, made our passage over it tedious, and gave the enemy an opportunity of drawing in their several cantonments, and assembling their whole force at Princeton. Their large pickets advanced towards Trenton, their great preparations, and some intelligence I had received, added to their knowledge, that the 1st of January brought on a dissolution of the best part of our army, gave me the strongest reasons to conclude, that an attack upon us was meditating.

Our situation was most critical, and our force small. To remove immediately was again destroying every dawn of hope, which had begun to revive in the breasts of the Jersey militia; and to bring those troops, who had first crossed the Delaware and were lying at Crosswicks under General Cadwalader, and those under General Mifflin at Bordentown, (amounting in the whole to about three thousand six hundred) to Trenton, was to bring them to an exposed place. One or the other, however, was unavoidable. The latter was preferred, and they were ordered to join us at Trenton, which they did, by a night-march, on the 1st instant. On the 2d, according to my expectation, the enemy began to advance upon us; and, after

some skirmishing, the head of their column reached Trenton about four o'clock, whilst their rear was as far back as Maidenhead. They attempted to pass Sanpink Creek, which runs through Trenton, at different places; but, finding the fords guarded, they halted, and kindled their fires. We were drawn up on the other side of the creek. In this situation we remained till dark, cannonading the enemy, and receiving the fire of their field-pieces, which did us but little damage.

Having by this time discovered, that the enemy were greatly superior in number, and that their design was to surround us, I ordered all our baggage to be removed silently to Burlington soon after dark; and at twelve o'clock after renewing our fires, and leaving guards at the bridge in Trenton, and other passes on the same stream above, marched by a roundabout road to Princeton, where I knew they could not have much force left, and might have stores. One thing I was certain of, that it would avoid the appearance of a retreat (which was of consequence, or to run the hazard of the whole army being cut off), whilst we might by a fortunate stroke withdraw General Howe from Trenton, and give some reputation to our arms. Happily we succeeded. We found Princeton about sunrise, with only three regiments and three troops of light-horse in it, two of which were on their march to Trenton. These three regiments, especially the two first, made a gallant resistance, and, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, must have lost five hundred men; upwards of one hundred of

them were left dead on the field; and, with what I have with me and what were taken in the pursuit and carried across the Delaware, there are near three hundred prisoners, fourteen of whom are officers, all British.

This piece of good fortune is counterbalanced by the loss of the brave and worthy General Mercer,[1] Colonels Hazlet and Potter, Captain Neal of the artillery, Captain Fleming, who commanded the 1st Virginia regiment, and four or five other valuable officers, who, with about twenty-five or thirty privates, were slain in the field. Our whole loss cannot be ascertained, as many, who were in pursuit of the enemy (who were chased three or four miles), are not yet come in. The rear of the enemy's army lying at Maidenhead, not more than five or six miles from Princeton, was up with us before our pursuit was over; but, as I had the precaution to destroy the bridge over Stony Brook, about half a mile from the field of action, they were so long retarded there, as to give us time to move off in good order for this place. We took two brass field-pieces; but, for want of horses, could not bring them away. We also took some blankets, shoes, and a few other trifling articles, burned the hay, and destroyed such other things, as the shortness of the time would admit of.

My original plan, when I set out from Trenton, was, to push on to Brunswic; but the harassed state

[1] This report of General Mercer's death was premature. He was captured by the British and died of his wounds on January 12th.

of our troops, many of them having had no rest for two nights and a day, and the danger of losing the advantage we had gained by aiming at too much, induced me, by the advice of my officers, to relinquish the attempt. But, in my judgment, six or eight hundred fresh troops upon a forced march would have destroyed all their stores and magazines, taken (as we have since learned) their military chest, containing seventy thousand pounds, and put an end to the war. The enemy, from the best intelligence I have been able to get, were so much alarmed at the apprehension of this, that they marched immediately to Brunswic without halting, except at the bridges (for I also took up those on Millstone, on the different routes to Brunswic), and got there before day.

From the best information I have received, General Howe has left no men either at Trenton or Princeton. The truth of this I am endeavoring to ascertain, that I may regulate my movements accordingly. The militia are taking spirits, and, I am told, are coming in fast from this State; but I fear those from Philadelphia will scarcely submit to the hardships of a winter campaign much longer, especially as they very unluckily sent their blankets with their baggage to Burlington. I must do them the justice however to add, that they have undergone more fatigue and hardship, than I expected militia, especially citizens, would have done at this inclement season. I am just moving to Morristown, where I shall endeavor to put them under the best cover I can. Hitherto we have been

without any; and many of our poor soldiers quite barefoot, and ill clad in other respects. I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS [2]

CHESTER twelve o'clock at Night,
11 September, 1777.

SIR,

I am sorry to inform you, that, in this day's engagement [the battle of Brandywine], we have been obliged to leave the enemy masters of the field. Unfortunately the intelligence recd., of the enemy's advancing up the Brandywine & crossing at a ford about six miles above us, was uncertain & contradictory, notwithstanding all my pains to get the best. This prevented my making a disposition adequate to the force with which the enemy

[1] In both the actions at Trenton and Princeton, General Washington encouraged the troops by his presence in the most exposed situations. An officer who was in these engagements wrote from Morristown on the 7th of January: "Our army love their General very much, but they have one thing against him, which is the little care he takes of himself in any action. His personal bravery, and the desire he has of animating his troops by example, make him fearless of danger. This occasions us much uneasiness. But Heaven, which has hitherto been his shield, I hope will still continue to guard so valuable a life."—*Sparks.*

[2] It is told of this letter that Washington after the fatigues of this day was too wearied to write to Congress, and directed one of his aides to do it. Harrison was too "distressed," and so it fell to Pickering, the Adjutant-General. "I wrote it and gave it to the General to read. He, with perfect composure, directed me to add a consolatory hope that another day would give a more fortunate result." *Greene, Life of Nathaniel Greene*, i., 454. The draft and original letter are both in Pickering's handwriting.—*Ford.*

attacked us on our right; in consequence of which, the troops first engaged were obliged to retire before they could be reinforced. In the midst of the attack on our right, that body of the enemy, which remained on the other side of Chad's Ford, crossed it, & attacked the division there under the command of General Wayne, & the light troops under Genl Maxwell, who, after a severe conflict, also retired. The militia under the command of Major-General Armstrong, being posted at a ford about two miles below Chad's, had no opportunity of engaging.

But altho we fought under many disadvantages, and were, from the causes above mentioned, obliged to retire, yet our loss of men is not, I am persuaded, very considerable; I believe much less than the enemy's. We have also lost seven or eight pieces of cannon, according to the best information I can at present obtain. The baggage, having been previously moved off, is all secure, saving the men's blankets, which being at their backs, many of them doubtless were lost. I have directed all the troops to assemble behind Chester, where they are now arranging for this night. Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits; and I hope another time we shall compensate for the losses now sustained. The Marquis de Lafayette was wounded in the leg, & General Woodford in the hand; divers other officers were wounded, & some slain; but the numbers of either cannot now be ascertained. I have the honor to be, &c.

P. S. It has not been in my power to send you earlier intelligence, the present being the first leisure moment I have had since the action.

TO LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ALEXANDER HAMILTON

CAMP, 22 September, 1777.

SIR,

The distressed situation of the army for want of blankets, and many necessary articles of cloathing, is truly deplorable; and must inevitably be destructive to it, unless a speedy remedy be applied. Without a better supply than they at present have, it will be impossible for the men to support the fatigues of the campaign in the further progress of the approaching inclement season. This you well know to be a melancholy truth. It is equally the dictate of common sense and the opinion of the Physicians of the army, as well as of every officer in it. No supply can be drawn from the public magazines. We have therefore no resource but from the private stock of individuals. I feel, and I lament, the absolute necessity of requiring the inhabitants to contribute to those wants, which we have no other means of satisfying, and which if unremoved would involve the ruin of the army, and perhaps the ruin of America. Painful as it is to me to order and as it will be to you to execute the measure, I am compelled to desire you immediately to proceed to Philadelphia, and there procure from the inhabitants contributions of blankets and cloathing, and materials to answer the purposes of

both, in proportion to the ability of each. This you will do with as much delicacy and discretion, as the nature of the business demands; and I trust the necessity will justify the proceeding in the eyes of every person well affected to the American cause, and that all good citizens will chearfully afford their assistance to soldiers, whose sufferings they are bound to commiserate, and who are eminently exposed to danger and distress, in defence of every thing they ought to hold dear.

As there are also a number of horses in Philadelphia both of public and private property, which would be a valuable acquisition to the enemy, should the city by any accident fall into their hands, you are hereby authorized and commanded to remove them thence into the Country to some place of greater security, and more remote from the operations of the enemy. You will stand in need of assistance from others to execute this commission with despatch and propriety, and you are therefore empowered to employ such persons as you shall think proper to aid you therein. I am, Sir, &c.[1]

[1] "I do not wish your exertions to be solely directed to obtaining Shoes and Blankets—extend them to every other article you know to be material for the army; your own prudence will point out the least exceptionable means to be pursued in these instances—but remember, that delicacy and a strict adherence to the ordinary modes of application must give place to our necessities. We must if possible, accommodate the soldiery with such articles as they stand in need of or we shall have just reasons to apprehend the most injurious and alarming consequences from the approaching season. . . . The business you are upon I know is disagreeable, and perhaps in the execution you may meet with more obstacles than were at first ap-

TO JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, 18 October, 1777.

DEAR BROTHER,

Your kind and affectionate Letters of the 21st of Septr. & 2d Inst. came safe to hand.

When my last to you was dated I know not; for truly I can say, that my whole time is so much engrossed, that I have scarcely a moment, but sleeping ones, for relaxation, or to indulge myself in writing to a friend. The anxiety you have been under, on acct of this army, I can easily conceive. Would to God there had been less cause for it; or that our situation at present was such as to promise much from it. The Enemy crossed the Schuylkill which, by the by, above the Falls (& the Falls you know is only five miles from the city) is as easily crossed in any place as Potomac Run, Aquia, or any other broad & shallow water, rather by stratagem; tho I do not know, that it was in our power to prevent it, as their manœuvres made it

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prehended and also with opposition. To the parties I have mentioned, call in such a number of militia as you may think necessary, observing however, over the conduct of the whole, a strict discipline, to prevent every species of rapine and disorder."—*Washington to Hamilton*, 22 September, 1777.

"I am glad you have began the collection of Blankets and Shoes. This business cannot be carried to too great an extent, and I think if the measure is properly pursued, great quantities of Blankets, Rugs and coverlids may be collected in the back Counties. The approach of the enemy to Philadelphia hindered the officers I sent upon that Business from doing much, the disaffected hid their goods the moment the thing took wind, and our friends had before parted with all they could spare." —*Washington to Elbridge Gerry*, 27 September, 1777.

necessary for us to attend to our Stores, which lay at Reading, towards which they seemed bending their course, and the loss of which must have proved our Ruin. After they had crossed, we took the first favorable opportunity of attacking them.[1]

This was attempted by a night's march of fourteen miles to surprise them, which we effectually did, so far as to reach their guards before they had notice of our coming; and but for a thick Fog, which rendered so infinitely dark at times as not to distinguish friend from Foe at the distance of thirty yards, we should, I believe, have made a decisive and glorious day of it. But Providence or some unaccountable something designed it otherwise; for after we had driven the Enemy a mile or two, after they were in the utmost confusion and flying before us in most places, after we were upon the point, (as it appeared to every body,) of grasping a compleat victory, our own troops took fright and fled with precipitation and disorder. How to acct for this, I know not; unless, as I before observed, the Fog represented their own Friends to them for a Reinforcement of the Enemy, as we attacked in different Quarters at the same time, and were about closing the wings of our army when this happened. One thing, indeed, contributed not a little to our misfortune, and that was want of ammunition on the right wing, which began the Engagement, and in the course of two hours and forty minutes, which time it lasted, had, (many of

[1] The engagement here described is the battle of Germantown.

them,) expended the forty Rounds, that they took into the Field. After the Engagement we removed to a place about twenty miles from the Enemy, to collect our Forces together, to take care of our wounded, get furnished with necessaries again, and be in a better posture, either for offensive or defensive operations. We are now advancing towards the Enemy again, being at this time within twelve miles of them.

Our loss in the late action was, in killed, wounded, and missing, about one thousand men, but of the missing, many, I dare say, took advantage of the times, and deserted. Genl. Nash of No. Carolina was wounded, and died two or three days after. Many valuable officers of ours was also wounded, and some killed. The Enemy's loss is variously reported—none make it less than 1500 (killed & wounded) & many estimate it much larger. Genl. Agnew of theirs was certainly killed —many officers wounded among whom some of distinction. This we certainly know, that the Hospital at Philadelphia & several large Meeting Houses, are filled with their wounded besides private Houses with the Horses. In a word, it was a bloody day. Would to Heaven I could add, that it had been a more fortunate one for us.

Our distress on acct. of Cloathing is great, and in a little time must be very sensibly felt, unless some expedient can be hit upon to obtain them. We have since the Battle got in abt. 1200 Militia from Virginia—about the same number have gone

off from this State and Jersey but others are promised in lieu of them—with truth however it may be said, that this State acts most infamously, the People of it, I mean, as we derive little or no assistance, from them. In short they are, in a manner, totally, disaffected, or in a kind of Lethargy.

The Enemy are making vigorous efforts to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and to possess themselves of the Works which have been constructed for the Defence of them.—I am doing all I can in my present situation to save them, God only knows which will succeed.

I very sincerely congratulate you on the change in your Family. Tell the young couple, after wishing them joy of their union, that it is my sincere hope, that it will be as happy and lasting as their present joys are boundless. The Enclosed Letter of thanks to my sister for her elegant present you will please to deliver; and, with sincere affection for you all, I am &c.

P. S. I had scarce finished this Letter when by express from the State of New York I received the Important and glorious news which follows:—

"ALBANY 13th Octr., 1777.

"Last night at 8 o'clock the capitulation whereby General Burgoyne & whole Army surrendered themselves Prisoners of War, was signed and this Morning they have to march out towds. the River above Fish Creek with the Honours of War (and there ground their Arms) they are from thence to be marched to Massachusetts bay.

"We congratulate you on this happy event, & remain &c.

"GEO. CLINTON."

I most devoutly congratulate you, my country, and every well wisher to the cause on this signal stroke of Providence. Yrs. as before.[1]

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

VALLEY FORGE, 23 December, 1777.

SIR,

Full as I was in my representation of the matters in the commissary's department yesterday, fresh and more powerful reasons oblige me to add, that I am now convinced beyond a doubt, that, unless some great and capital change suddenly takes [place] in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things; starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence

[1] General Gates made no official report to the commander-in-chief concerning Burgoyne's surrender. Washington expressed to him his regret "that a matter of such magnitude, and so interesting to our general operations, should have reached me by report only, or through the channel of letters, not bearing that authenticity, which the importance of it required, and which it would have received by a line under your signature, stating the simple fact."—*Washington to Gates*, 30 October, 1777. In a letter written November 2, 1777, and devoted chiefly to other matters, Gates said, apparently as an afterthought, "Congress having been requested immediately to transmit copies of all my despatches to them, I am confident your Excellency has long ago received all the good news from this quarter." This is the only statement which Gates saw fit to send to Washington concerning one of the most important events of the war.

in the best manner they can. Rest assured, Sir, this is not an exaggerated picture, and that I have abundant reason to suppose what I say.

Yesterday afternoon, receiving information that the enemy in force had left the city, and were advancing towards Derby with the apparent design to forage, and draw subsistence from that part of the country, I ordered the troops to be in readiness, that I might give every opposition in my power; when behold, to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that the men were unable to stir on account of provision, and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before, and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended for want of this article. This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp; and, with him, this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour! From hence form an opinion of our situation when I add, that he could not tell when to expect any.

All I could do under these circumstances, was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the soldiery. But will this answer? No, Sir; three or four days of bad weather would prove our destruction. What then is to become of the army this winter? And if we are so often without

provisions now, what is to become of us in the spring, when our force will be collected, with the aid perhaps of militia to take advantage of an early campaign, before the enemy can be reinforced? These are considerations of great magnitude, meriting the closest attention; and they will, when my own reputation is so intimately connected with the event and to be affected by it, justify my saying, that the present commissaries are by no means equal to the execution of the office, or that the disaffection of the people is past all belief. The misfortune, however, does in my opinion proceed from both causes; and, though I have been tender heretofore of giving any opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted; yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare, that no man in my opinion ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army.

Since the month of July we have had no assistance from the quartermaster-general, and to want of assistance from this department the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add, that, notwithstanding it is a standing order, and often repeated, that the troops shall always have two days' provisions by them,

that they might be ready at any sudden call; yet an opportunity has scarcely ever offered, of taking an advantage of the enemy, that has not been either totally obstructed, or greatly impeded, on this account. And this, the great and crying evil, is not all. The soap, vinegar, and other articles allowed by Congress, we see none of, nor have we seen them, I believe, since the battle of Brandywine. The first, indeed, we have now little occasion for; few men having more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all. In addition to which, as a proof of the little benefit received from a clothier-general, and as a further proof of the inability of an army, under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of soldiers, (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account,) we have, by a field-return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot and otherwise naked. By the same return it appears, that our whole strength in Continental troops, including the eastern brigades, which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two hundred in camp fit for duty; notwithstanding which, and that since the 4th instant, our numbers fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on account of blankets (numbers having been obliged, and still are, to sit

up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural and common way), have decreased near two thousand men.

We find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter-quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the Remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I have described ours to be, which are by no means exaggerated, to confine a superior one, in all respects well-appointed and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is, that these very gentlemen,—who were well apprized of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and who advised me near a month ago to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve of Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days agreeably to a decree of the State (not one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand), —should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of these States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and

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less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and, from my soul, I pity those miseries, which it is neither in my power to relieve or prevent.[1]

It is for these reasons, therefore, that I have dwelt upon the subject; and it adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress to find, that much more is expected of me than is possible to be performed, and that upon the ground of safety and policy I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny. The honorable committee of Congress went from camp fully possessed of my sentiments respecting the establishment of this army, the necessity of auditors of accounts, the appointment of officers, and new arrangements. I have no need, therefore, to be prolix upon these subjects, but I refer to the committee. I shall add a word or two to show, first, the necessity of some better provision for binding the officers by the tie of interest to the service, as no day nor scarce an hour passes without the offer of a resigned commission[2]; (otherwise I much doubt

[1] Alluding to the Memorial, or Remonstrance, of the legislature of Pennsylvania, respecting his going into winter-quarters.—*Sparks.*

[2] Resignations had become so numerous that the House of Commons of North Carolina passed a resolution to the effect

the practicability of holding the army together much longer, and in this I shall probably be thought the more sincere, when I freely declare, that I do not myself expect to derive the smallest benefit from any establishment that Congress may adopt, otherwise than as a member of the community at large in the good, which I am persuaded will result from the measure, by making better officers and better troops;) and, secondly, to point out the necessity of making the appointments and arrangements without loss of time. We have not more than three months, in which to prepare a great deal of business. If we let these slip or waste, we shall be laboring under the same difficulties all next campaign, as we have been this, to rectify mistakes and bring things to order.

Military arrangement, and movements in consequence, like the mechanism of a clock, will be imperfect and disordered by the want of a part. In a very sensible degree have I experienced this, in the course of the last summer, several brigades having no brigadiers appointed to them till late, and some not at all; by which means it follows, that an additional weight is thrown upon the shoulders of the Commander-in-chief, to withdraw his attention from the great line of his duty. The gentlemen of the committee, when they were at camp, talked of an expedient for adjusting these matters,

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that any Carolina officer who should resign his commission without reasons which were acceptable to the Commander-in-chief should be ineligible to any office, civil or military, within the gift of the State.

which I highly approved and wish to see adopted; namely, that two or three members of the Board of War, or a committee of Congress, should repair immediately to camp, where the best aid can be had, and with the commanding officer, or a committee of his appointment, prepare and digest the most perfect plan, that can be devised, for correcting all abuses and making new arrangements; considering what is to be done with the weak and debilitated regiments, if the States to which they belong will not draft men to fill them, for as to enlisting soldiers it seems to me to be totally out of the question; together with many other things, that would occur in the course of such a conference; and, after digesting matters in the best manner they can, to submit the whole to the ultimate determination of Congress.

If this measure is approved, I would earnestly advise the immediate execution of it, and that the commissary-general of purchases, whom I rarely see, may be directed to form magazines without a moment's delay in the neighbourhood of this camp, in order to secure provision for us in case of bad weather. The quartermaster-general ought also to be busy in his department. In short, there is as much to be done in preparing for a campaign, as in the active part of it. Everything depends upon the preparation that is made in the several departments, and the success or misfortunes of the next campaign will more than probably originate with our activity or supineness during this winter. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO BRYAN FAIRFAX[1]

VALLEY FORGE, 1 March, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 8th of December came safe to my hands, after a considerable delay on its passage. The sentiments you have expressed to me in this letter are highly flattering, meriting my warmest acknowledgments, as I have too good an opinion of your sincerity and candor to believe that you are capable of unmeaning professions, and speaking a language foreign to your heart.

[1] An early and intimate friendship subsisted between Washington and Bryan Fairfax, which does not appear to have been at any period of their lives interrupted, although they differed widely in their political sentiments. This was illustrated in a striking manner by the letters that passed between them in the year 1774. Mr. Fairfax considered the pretensions of Parliament unjustifiable, and believed there were many grievances, which ought to be redressed; but he could not reconcile to himself the idea of taking up arms against the King. Differing thus from the majority of his countrymen and from his friends, he thought it his duty to go to England and remain there during the contest. With this aim he repaired to New York, having obtained a passport from the Commander-in-chief. But when he arrived there, he was diverted from his purpose by having certain oaths prescribed to him, which his conscience would not allow him to take, being afraid they might prevent him from ever again seeing his wife and children. This hesitancy excited a prejudice against him, which he thought unreasonable, and he obtained permission from the British commander to return to his family. On his journey he again visited General Washington, and was received by him with so much kindness, and such marked civilities, that he wrote him a letter of acknowledgments and thanks soon after he reached Virginia, to which the above is a reply. In that letter he said:

"There are times when favors conferred make a greater impression than at others, for, though I have received many, I hope I have not been unmindful of them; yet that, at a time your popularity was at the highest and mine at the lowest, and

The friendship, which I ever professed and felt for you, met with no diminution from the difference in our political sentiments. I know the rectitude of my own intentions, and, believing in the sincerity of yours, lamented, though I did not condemn, your renunciation of the creed I had adopted. Nor do I think any person or power ought to do it, whilst your conduct is not opposed to the general interest of the people, and the measures they are pursuing; the latter, that is, our actions, depending upon ourselves, may be controlled, while the powers of thinking, originating in higher causes, cannot always be moulded to our wishes.

The determinations of Providence are always wise, often inscrutable; and, though its decrees appear to bear hard upon us at times, is nevertheless meant for gracious purposes. In this light I cannot help viewing your late disappointment; for if you had been permitted to have gone to England, unrestrained even by the rigid oaths, which are administered on those occasions, your feelings as a husband, parent &c, must have been considerably wounded in the prospect of a long, perhaps lasting, separation from your nearest relatives. What then must they have been, if the obligation of an oath had left you without a will? Your hope of being instrumental in restoring peace would

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when it is so common for men's resentments to run high against those, who differ from them in opinion, you should act with your wonted kindness towards me, has affected me more than any favor I have received; and could not be believed by some in New York, it being above the run of common minds."—*Sparks.*

prove as unsubstantial, as mist before the noonday's sun, and would as soon dispel; for, believe me, Sir, Great Britain understood herself perfectly well in this dispute, but did not comprehend America. She meant, as Lord Camden, in his late speech in Parliament, clearly and explicitly declared, to drive America into rebellion, that her own purposes might be more fully answered by it; but take this along with it, that this plan originated in a firm belief, founded on misinformation, that no effectual opposition would or could be made. They little dreamt of what has happened, and are disappointed in their views.[1]

Does not every act of Administration, from the Tea Act to the present session of Parliament, de-

[1] The allusion here is to Lord Camden's remarks, in the debate respecting the reply to the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament, November 18, 1777. The debate turned on American affairs, the causes of the dispute, and the mode in which the war had been conducted. Lord Camden, referring to some of the preliminary steps in the contest, said: "The people of America showed great dissatisfaction, but that did not fully answer the intentions of government. It was not dissatisfaction, but rebellion, that was sought; dissatisfaction might furnish a pretence for adding to the intolerable oppressions, that those people had for a series of years groaned under; but nothing short of something in the shape of rebellion, or nearly approaching to it, could create a decent apology for slaughter, conquest, and unconditional submission." Again, in regard to the address declaring Massachusetts Bay to be in rebellion, Lord Camden continued: "But all this did not do; the New Englanders were resolved not to verify the address; they were determined not to be rebels; but only to prepare, should the worst happen, to be in a situation to defend themselves. Something more was still wanting, and that was obtained. Our troops were ordered to act effectively; and self-defence was styled actual and declared rebellion."—Almon's *Parliamentary Register*, vol. x., pp. 30, 31.—*Sparks.*

clare this in plain and self-evident characters? Had the commissioners any power to treat with America? If they meant peace, would Lord Howe have been detained in England five months after passing the act? Would the powers of these commissioners have been confined to mere acts of grace, upon condition of absolute submission? No! surely, no! They meant to drive us into what they termed rebellion, that they might be furnished with a pretext to disarm, and then strip us of the rights and privileges of Englishmen and citizens.

If they were actuated by the principles of justice, why did they refuse indignantly to accede to the terms, which were humbly supplicated before hostilities commenced, and this country deluged in blood; and now make their principal officers, and even the commissioners themselves, say that these terms are just and reasonable; nay, that more will be granted, than we have yet asked, if we will relinquish our claim to independency? What name does such conduct as this deserve? And what punishment is there in store for the men, who have distressed millions, involved thousands in ruin, and plunged numberless families in inextricable woe? Could that, which is just and reasonable now, have been unjust four years ago? If not, upon what principles, I say, does Administration act? They must either be wantonly wicked and cruel, or (which is only another mode of describing the same thing) under false colors are now endeavoring to deceive the great body of the people, by industriously propagating a belief, that Great Britain

is willing to offer any, and that we will accept of no terms; thereby hoping to poison and disaffect the minds of those, who wish for peace, and create feuds and dissensions among ourselves. In a word, having less dependence now in their arms than in their arts, they are practising such low and dirty tricks, that men of sentiment and honor must blush at their villainy. Among other manœuvres in this way, they are counterfeiting letters, and publishing them as intercepted ones of mine, to prove that I am an enemy to the present measures, and have been led into them step by step, still hoping that Congress would recede from their present claims. I am, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate, &c.

TO JOHN BANISTER, DELEGATE IN CONGRESS

VALLEY FORGE, 21 April, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

On Saturday evening I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 16th instant.

I thank you very much for your obliging tender of a friendly intercourse between us; and you may rest assured that I embrace it with cheerfulness, and shall write you freely, as often as leisure will permit, of such points as appear to me material and interesting. I am pleased to find, that you expect the proposed establishment of the army will succeed; though is it a painful consideration, that matters of such pressing importance and obvious necessity meet with so much difficulty and delay.

Be assured, the success of the measure is a matter of the most serious moment, and that it ought to be brought to a conclusion as speedily as possible. The spirit of resigning commissions has been long at an alarming height, and increases daily. Applications from officers on furlough are hourly arriving and Genls. Heath at Boston—McDougall on the north River and Mason of Virginia are asking what they are to do with the applicants to them.

The Virginia line has sustained a violent shock in this instance. Not less than ninety have already resigned to me. The same conduct has prevailed among the officers from the other States, though not yet to so considerable a degree; and there are but too just grounds to fear, that it will shake the very existence of the army, unless a remedy is soon, very soon, applied. There is none, in my opinion, so effectual as the one pointed out.[1] This, I trust, will satisfy the officers, and at the same time it will produce no present additional emission of money. They will not be persuaded to sacrifice all views of present interest, and encounter the numerous vicissitudes of war, in the defence of their country, unless she will be generous enough on her part to make a decent provision for their future support. I do not pronounce absolutely, that we shall have no army if the establishment fails, but the army we may have will be without discipline, without energy, incapable of

[1] The remedy advocated by Washington was the establishment of half-pay for the officers after the conclusion of the war.

acting with vigor, and destitute of those elements necessary to promise success on the one hand, or to withstand the shocks of adversity on the other. It is indeed hard to say how extensive the evil may be, if the measure should be rejected, or much longer delayed. I find it a very arduous task to keep the officers in tolerable humor, and to protract such a combination in quitting the service, as might possibly undo us for ever.

The difference between our service and that of the enemy is very striking. With us, from the peculiar, unhappy situation of things, the officer, a few instances excepted, must break in upon his private fortune for present support, without a prospect of future relief. With them, even companies are esteemed so honorable and so valuable, that they have sold of late from fifteen to twenty-two hundred pounds sterling; and I am credibly informed, that four thousand guineas have been given for a troop of dragoons. You will readily determine how this difference will operate; what effects it must produce. Men may speculate as they will; they may talk of patriotism; they may draw a few examples from ancient story, of great achievements performed by its influence; but whoever builds upon them, as a sufficient basis for conducting a long and bloody war, will find themselves deceived in the end. We must take the passions of men as nature has given them, and those principles as a guide, which are generally the rule of action. I do not mean to exclude altogether the idea of patriotism. I know it exists, and I know

it has done much in the present contest. But I will venture to assert, that a great and lasting war can never be supported on this principle alone. It must be aided by a prospect of interest, or some reward. For a time it may, of itself, push men to action, to bear much, to encounter difficulties; but it will not endure unassisted by interest.

The necessity of putting the army upon a respectable footing, both as to numbers and constitution, is now become more essential than ever. The enemy are beginning to play a game more dangerous, than their efforts by arms (though these will not be remitted in the smallest degree), and which threatens a fatal blow to the independence of America, and to her liberties of course. They are endeavoring to ensnare the people by specious allurements of peace. It is not improbable they have had such abundant cause to be tired of the war, that they may be sincere in the terms they offer, which, though far short of our pretensions, will be extremely flattering to minds, that do not penetrate far into political consequences; but, whether they are sincere or not, they may be equally destructive; for, to discerning men nothing can be more evident, than that a peace on the principles of dependence, however limited, after what has happened, would be to the last degree dishonorable and ruinous.[1] It is however much to be

[1] There was at this time in Parliament a small party in favor of granting independence to America, and of instructing the commissioners to make a treaty on that footing. Governor Pownall held out this idea, and enforced it with strong arguments, in the debate on the address to the King, in reply to his

apprehended, that the idea of such an event will have a very powerful effect upon the country, and if not combated with the greatest address will serve, at least, to produce supineness and disunion. Men are naturally fond of peace, and there are symptoms which may authorize an opinion, that the people of America are pretty generally weary of the present war. It is doubtful, whether many of our friends might not incline to an accommodation on the grounds held out, or which may be, rather than persevere in a contest for independence. If this is the case, it must surely be the truest policy to strengthen the army, and place it upon a substantial footing. This will conduce to inspire the country with confidence; enable those at the head of affairs to consult the public honor and interest, notwithstanding the defection of some and temporary inconsistency and irresolution of others, who may desire to compromise the dispute; and, if a treaty should be deemed expedient, will put it in

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message accompanying the declaration of the French ambassador, which gave notice of the treaty between France and the United States. "This treaty," said Governor Pownall, "does not alter my idea of the probability of our having even yet peace with America, if we will but take the way that leads to it, and the only one that is open. Nothing but the perverseness of our own conduct can cross it. We know that the Americans are and must be independent; and yet we will not treat with them as such. If government itself retains the least idea of sovereignty, it has already gone too far for that; if it entertains the least hope of peace, it has not gone far enough; and every step we shall take to put the Americans back from independency, will convince them the more of the necessity of going forward."—*Parliamentary Debates*, March 17th, 1778.—*Sparks*.

their power to insist upon better terms, than they could otherwise expect.

Besides the most vigorous exertions at home to increase and establish our military force upon a good basis, it appears to me advisable, that we should immediately try the full extent of our interest abroad, and bring our European negotiations to an issue. I think France must have ratified our independence,[1] and will declare war immediately, on finding that serious proposals of accommodation are made; but lest, from a mistaken policy or too exalted an opinion of our power from the representations she has had, she should still remain indecisive, it were to be wished, proper persons were instantly despatched, or our envoys already there instructed to insist pointedly on her coming to a final determination.[2] It cannot be fairly supposed, that she will hesitate a moment to

[1] This was true, although the fact was not yet known in America. The treaties of commerce and alliance between France and the United States were signed on the 6th of February. The first meeting between the French minister and the American commissioners, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty, was held at Versailles on the 12th of December. It was stated, in an article of the treaty of alliance, to be its direct end, "to maintain effectually the liberty, sovereignty, and independence, absolute and unlimited, of the United States, as well in matters of government as commerce."—See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, vol. i., pp. 355, 364.—*Sparks.*

[2] It seems there were some fears at this moment as to the effect which might be produced on the American people by the advances of the British ministry in Lord North's propositions. In a reply to General Washington's circular letter, asking the advice of the general officers respecting a plan of the campaign, the Marquis de Lafayette stated, as reasons for vigorous measures, the expected reinforcements of the enemy, and the approaching arrival of three commissioners, "whom I fear,"

declare war, if she is given to understand, in a proper manner, that a reunion of the two countries may be the consequence of procrastination. A European war and a European alliance would effectually answer our purposes. If the step I now mention should be eligible, despatches ought to be sent at once by different conveyances, for fear of accidents. I confess, it appears to me a measure of this kind could not but be productive of the most salutary consequences. If possible, I should also suppose it absolutely necessary to obtain good intelligence from England, pointing out the true springs of this manœuvre of ministry; the preparations of force they are making; the prospects there

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said he, "more than ten thousand men."—*MS. Letter*, April 25th.

General Washington himself, in a letter to his brother, written a few days after the above, speaks as follows, alluding to the British commissioners. "It will require," he observes, "all the skill, wisdom, and policy of the first abilities of these States to manage the helm, and steer with judgment to the haven of our wishes, through so many shelves and rocks as will be thrown in our way. This, more than ever, is the time for Congress to be filled with the first characters from every State, instead of having a thin assembly, and many States totally unrepresented, as is the case at present. I have often regretted the pernicious, and what appears to me fatal policy of having our ablest men engaged in the formation of the more local governments, and filling offices in their respective States, leaving the great national concern (on which the superstructure of all and every of them absolutely depends, and without which none can exist,) to be managed by men of more contracted abilities. Indeed, those at a distance from the seat of war live in such perfect tranquillity, that they conceive the dispute to be in a manner at an end; and those near it are so disaffected, that they only serve as embarrassments. Between the two, therefore, time slips away without the necessary means for opening the campaign in season or with propriety."—*Sparks.*

are of raising it; the amount, and when it may be expected.

It really seems to me, from a comprehensive view of things, that a period is fast approaching, big with events of the most interesting importance; when the counsels we pursue, and the part we act, may lead decisively to liberty or to slavery. Under this idea, I cannot but regret that inactivity, that inattention, that want of something, which unhappily I have but too often experienced in our public affairs. I wish that our representation in Congress was complete and full from every State, and that it was formed of the first abilities among us. Whether we continue to war or proceed to negotiate, the wisdom of America in council cannot be too great. Our situation will be truly delicate. To enter into a negotiation too hastily, or to reject it altogether, may be attended with consequences equally fatal. The wishes of the people, seldom founded in deep disquisitions, or resulting from other reasonings than their present feelings, may not entirely accord with our true policy and interest. If they do not, to observe a proper line of conduct for promoting the one, and avoiding offence to the other, will be a work of great difficulty.

Nothing short of independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A peace on other terms would, if I may be allowed the expression, be a peace of war. The injuries we have received from the British nation were so unprovoked, and have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten. Besides the feuds, the jealousies, the

animosities, that would ever attend a union with them; besides the importance, the advantages, we should derive from an unrestricted commerce; our fidelity as a people, our gratitude, our character as men, are opposed to a coalition with them as subjects, but in case of the last extremity. Were we easily to accede to terms of dependence, no nation, upon future occasions, let the oppressions of Britain be never so flagrant and unjust, would interpose for our relief; or, at most, they would do it with a cautious reluctance, and upon conditions most probably that would be hard, if not dishonorable to us. France, by her supplies, has saved us from the yoke thus far; and a wise and virtuous perseverance would, and I trust will, free us entirely.

I have sent Congress Lord North's speech, and the two bills offered by him to Parliament. They are spreading fast through the country, and will soon become a subject of general notoriety. I therefore think they had best be published in our papers, and persons of leisure and ability set to work to counteract the impressions they may make on the minds of the people.

Before I conclude, there are one or two points more, upon which I will add an observation or two. The first is, the indecision of Congress and the delay used in coming to determinations on matters referred to them. This is productive of a variety of inconveniences; and an early decision, in many cases, though it should be against the measure submitted, would be attended with less pernicious

effects. Some new plan might then be tried; but, while the matter is held in suspense, nothing can be attempted. The other point is, the *jealousy,* which Congress unhappily entertain of the army, and which, if reports are right, some members labor to establish. You may be assured, there is nothing more injurious, or more unjustly founded. This jealousy stands upon the commonly received opinion, which under proper limitations is certainly true, that standing armies are dangerous to a State, and from forming the same conclusion of the component parts of all, though they are totally dissimilar in their nature. The prejudices in other countries have only gone to them in time of *peace,* and these from their not having in general cases any of the ties, the concerns, or interests of citizens, or any other dependence, than what flowed from their military employ; in short, from their being mercenaries, hirelings. It is our policy to be prejudiced against them in time of *war;* & though they are citizens, having all the ties and interests of citizens, and in most cases property totally unconnected with the military line.

If we would pursue a right system of policy, in my opinion, there should be none of these distinctions. We should all be considered, Congress and army, as one people, embarked in one cause, in one interest; acting on the same principle, and to the same end. The distinction, the jealousies set up, or perhaps only incautiously let out, can answer not a single good purpose. They are impolitic in the extreme. Among individuals the most certain

way to make a man your enemy is to tell him you esteem him such. So with public bodies; and the very jealousy, which the narrow politics of some may affect to entertain of the army, in order to a due subordination to the supreme civil authority, is a likely mean to produce a contrary effect; to incline it to the pursuit of those measures, which they may wish it to avoid. It is unjust, because no order of men in the Thirteen States has paid a more sanctimonious regard to their proceedings than the army; and indeed it may be questioned whether there has been that scrupulous adherence had to them by any other, for without arrogance or the smallest deviation from truth it may be said, that no history now extant can furnish an instance of an army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours has done, and bearing them with the same patience and fortitude. To see men, without clothes to cover their nakedness, without blankets to lie on, without shoes, by which their marches might be traced by the blood from their feet, and almost as often without provisions as with them, marching through the frost and snow, and at Christmas taking up their winter-quarters within a day's march of the enemy, without a house or hut to cover them, till they could be built, and submitting to it without a murmur, is a proof of patience and obedience, which in my opinion can scarce be paralleled.

There may have been some remonstrances or applications to Congress, in the style of complaint, from the army, and slaves indeed should we be, if

this privilege were denied, on account of their proceedings in particular instances; but these will not authorize nor even excuse a jealousy, that they are therefore aiming at unreasonable powers, or making strides dangerous or subversive of civil authority. Things should not be viewed in that light, more especially as Congress in some cases have relieved the injuries complained of, & which had flowed from their own acts. I refer you to my letter to yourself and Colo. Lee which accompanies this upon the subject of money for such of the old Virginia troops as have or may reinlist.

In respect to the volunteer plan, I scarce know what opinion to give at this time. The propriety of a requisition on this head will depend altogether on our operations. Such kind of troops should not be called for, but upon the spur of the occasion, and at the moment of executing an enterprise. They will not endure a long service; and, of all men in the military line, they are the most impatient of restraint and necessary government.

As the propositions and the speech of Lord North must be founded in the despair of the nation of succeeding against us; or from a rupture in Europe, that has actually happened, or certainly will happen [1]; or from some deep political man-

[1] This conjecture was well founded. There is no room to doubt that, when the Conciliatory Bills were brought before Parliament by Lord North, the ministry were convinced a negotiation was pending between the French court and the American commissioners. During the debate (February 17th), and in reply to Lord North's speech, Mr. Fox affirmed, upon information on which reliance might be placed, that a treaty

œuvre; or from what I think still more likely, a composition of the whole, would it not be good policy, in this day of uncertainty and distress to the Tories, to avail ourselves of the occasion, and for the several States to hold out pardon &c. to all delinquents returning by a certain day?[1] They are frightened, and this is the time to operate upon them. Upon a short consideration of the matter, it appears to me, that such a measure would detach the Tories from the enemy, and bring things to a much speedier conclusion, and of course be a mean of saving much public treasure.

I will now be done and I trust that you excuse, not only the length of my letter, but the freedom with which I have delivered my sentiments in the course of it upon several occasions. The subjects struck me as important and interesting, and I have only to wish, that they may appear to you in the same light.

I am, dear Sir, with great regard, &c.[2]

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had already been signed; and when the question was pressed by Mr. Grenville upon Lord North, he answered, "that he could not say from authority that the treaty alluded to was signed; that, indeed, it was possible, nay too probable, but not authenticated by the ambassador."—Almon's *Parliamentary Register*, vol. viii., 385, 389. The question how the British were informed of the signing of the treaty before the formal notice of the French minister, led to a serious dispute among the American commissioners at Paris.—*Sparks.*

[1] This measure was adopted by Congress two days after the above letter was written.—*Journals*, April 23d.—*Sparks.*

[2] "With respect to your future treatment of the Tories, the most effectual way of putting a stop to their traitorous practices will be shooting some of the most notorious offenders wherever they can be found *in flagrante delicto.* This summary punishment inflicted on a few traitors will probably

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

FISHKILL, Oct. 4th, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

My public Letters to the President of Congress will inform you of the wind that wafted me to this place. Nothing more therefore need be said on that head. Your Letter of the 8th ulto. contains three questions and answers, to wit; Can the Enemy prosecute the war? Do they mean to stay on the Continent? And, is it our interest to put impediments in the way of their departure? To the first you answer in the negative. To the second you are decided in opinion, that they do not. And to the third say clearly, No.

Much, my good Sir, may be said in favor of these answers, and *some* things against the two first of them. By way therefore of dissertation on the first, I will also beg leave to put a question, and give it an answer. Can *we* carry on the war much longer? Certainly NO, unless some measures can be devised & speedily executed to restore the credit of our currency, restrain extortion, & punish forestallers. Without these can be effected, what funds can stand the present expenses of the army? And what officer can bear the weight of prices, that every necessary article is now got to? A Rat in the shape of a horse, is not to be bought at this time for less than £200; A Saddle under Thirty or

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strike terror into others and deter them from exposing themselves to a similar fate."—*Washington to Joseph Kirkbride, Lieutenant of the County of Bucks*, 20 April, 1778.

Forty;—Boots twenty,—and shoes and other articles in the like proportion.—How is it possible, therefore, for officers to stand this without an increase of pay? And how is it possible to advance their Pay, when Flour is selling (at different places) from five to fifteen pounds pr cwt.,—Hay from ten to thirty pounds pr Tunn, and Beef & other essentials in this proportion?

The true point of light, then, to place & consider this matter in is, not simply whether Gt. Britain can carry on the war, but whose Finances, (theirs or ours,) is most likely to fail; which leads me to doubt very much the infallibility of the answer given to your second question, respecting the Enemy's leaving the Continent; for I believe they will not do it, while ever *hope* and the chapter of *accidents* can give them a *chance* of bringing us to terms short of *Independence.*—But this, *you* will perhaps say, they are now bereft of. *I* shall acknowledge that many things favor the idea; but add, that, upon a comparative view of circumstances, there is abundant matter to puzzle & confound the judgment. To your third answer I subscribe with hand and heart. The opening is now fair, and God grant that they may embrace the opportunity of bidding an eternal adieu to our (once quit of them) happy Land. If the Spaniards would but join their Fleets to those of France, & commence hostilities, my doubts would all subside. Without it, I fear the British Navy has it too much in its power to counteract the Schemes of France.

The high prices of every necessary; The little, indeed no benefit, which officers have derived from the intended bounty of Congress in the article of cloathing; The change in the establishment, by which so many of them are discontinued; The unfortunate delay of this business, which kept them too long in suspense, and set a number of evil spirits to work; The unsettled Rank, and contradictory modes of adjusting it,—with other causes, which might be enumerated have conspired to sour the temper of the army exceedingly; and has, I am told, been productive of a memorial or representation of some kind to Congress; which neither directly nor indirectly did I know or even hear was in agitation, till some days after it was despatched; owing, as I apprehend, to the secrecy with which it was conducted to keep it from my knowledge, as I had in a similar instance last spring discountenanced and stifled a child of the same illegitimacy in its birth. If you have any news worth communicating, do not put it under a bushel, but give it to, dear Sir, yours sincerely, &c.

TO HENRY LAURENS, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

FREDG., 14th Novr., 1778.

DR. SIR,

This will be accompanied by an official letter [1] on

[1] This letter to the President of Congress, dated 11 November, 1778, is one of the best of Washington's military papers. It is printed in Ford, *The Writings of George Washington*, vii., 239.

the subject of the proposed expedition against Canada. You will perceive I have only considered it in a military light; indeed I was not authorized to consider it in any other; and I am not without apprehensions, that I may be thought, in what I have done, to have exceeded the limits intended by Congress. But my solicitude for the public welfare, which I think deeply interested in this affair, will, I hope, justify me in the eyes of all those, who view things through that just medium. I do not know, Sir, what may be your sentiments in the present case; but, whatever they are, I am sure I can confide in your honor and friendship, and shall not hesitate to unbosom myself to you on a point of the most delicate and important nature.

The question of the Canadian expedition, in the form it now stands, appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated our national deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is, in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interests of my country. This is the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that Province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connexion of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy. Let us realize for a moment the striking advantages France would derive from the

possession of Canada; the acquisition of an extensive territory, abounding in supplies for the use of her Islands; the opening a vast source of the most beneficial commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then monopolize; the having ports of her own on this continent independent of the precarious good will of an ally; the engrossing of the whole trade of Newfoundland whenever she pleased, the finest nursery of seamen in the world; the security afforded to her Islands; and, finally, the facility of awing and controlling these States, the natural and most formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe. Canada would be a solid acquisition to France on all these accounts, and because of the numerous inhabitants, subjects to her by inclination, who would aid in preserving it under her power against the attempt of every other.

France, acknowledged for some time past the most powerful monarchy in Europe by land, able now to dispute the empire of the sea with Britain, and if joined with Spain, I may say, certainly superior, possessed of New Orleans on our right, Canada on our left, and seconded by the numerous tribes of indians in our rear from one extremity to the other, a people so generally friendly to her, and whom she knows so well to conciliate, would, it is much to be apprehended, have it in her power to give law to these States.

Let us suppose, that, when the five thousand french troops (and under the idea of that number twice as many might be introduced) were entered

the city of Quebec, they should declare an intention to hold Canada, as a pledge and surety for the debts due to France from the United States, or, under other specious pretences, hold the place till they can find a bone of contention, and, in the mean while, should excite the Canadians to engage in supporting their pretences & claims; what should we be able to say, with only four or five thousand men to carry on the dispute? It may be supposed, that France would not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind, as the consequence would be a reunion with England on some terms or other, and the loss of what she had acquired in so violent and unjustifiable a manner, with all the advantages of an alliance with us. This, in my opinion, is too slender a security against the measure, to be relied on. The truth of the position will entirely depend on naval events. If France and Spain should unite, and obtain a decided superiority by Sea, a reunion with England would avail very little, and might be set at defiance. France, with a numerous army at command, might throw in what number of land forces she thought proper, to support her pretensions; and England, without men, without money, and inferior on her favorite element, could give no effectual aid to oppose them. Resentment, reproaches, and submission seem to be all that would be left to us. Men are very apt to run into extremes. Hatred to England may carry some into an excess of Confidence in France, especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men

of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favorable sentiments of our new ally, and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree. But it is maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step, into which we may unwarily fall.

If France should even engage in the scheme, in the first instance, with the purest intentions, there is the greatest danger that, in the progress of the business, invited to it by circumstances, and perhaps urged on by the solicitations and wishes of the Canadians, she would alter her views.

As the Marquis clothed his proposition, when he spoke it to me, it would seem to originate wholly with himself; but, it is far from impossible, that it had its birth in the Cabinet of France, and was put into this artful dress to give it the readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenances of some people, on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies. I hope I am mistaken, and that my fears of mischief make me refine too much, and awaken jealousies that have no sufficient foundation. But upon the whole, Sir, to wave every other consideration, I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish, as

much as possible, to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable. I am, with the truest attachment and most perfect confidence, dear Sir, &c.[1]

[1] Washington was not alone in his suspicions concerning Lafayette's project for the conquest of Canada. He had consulted John Jay, who concurred in his views, while President Laurens wrote him, "I demurred exceedingly to the Marquis's scheme, and expressed some doubts of the concurrence of Congress. This was going as far as I dared consistently with my office, or considering him as a gentleman of equal honor and tenacity.* * * The business was referred to a committee, who conferred with the Marquis. Their report was framed agreeably to his wishes, but the House very prudently determined to consult the Commander-in-chief previously to a final determination; and, although your Excellency's observations are committed, I am much mistaken if every member of Congress is not decided in his opinion in favor of them."—*Laurens to Washington*, 20 November, 1778. Lafayette's project was defeated, however, in an unexpected manner. As to this, one of Washington's biographers writes, "His [Washington's] words had no effect on Congress, but as it turned out, the plan failed through adverse influences in the quarter where Washington least expected them. He believed that this Canadian plan had been put into Lafayette's mind by the cabinet of Louis XVI., and he could not imagine that a policy of such obvious wisdom could be overlooked by French statesmen. In this he was completely mistaken, for France failed to see what seemed so simple to the American general, that the opportunity had come to revive her old American policy, and re-establish her colonies under the most favorable conditions. The ministers of Louis XVI., moreover, did not wish the colonies to conquer Canada, and the plan of Lafayette and the Congress received no aid in Paris and came to nothing. But the fruitless incident exhibits in the strongest light the attitude of Washington as a purely American statesman, and the comprehensiveness of his mind in dealing with large affairs."—Lodge, *George Washington*, i., 248.

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES OF VIRGINIA

HEAD-QRS., MIDDLE BROOK, 18 December, 1778.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * I can assign but two causes for the enemy's continuance among us; and these balance so equally in my mind, that I scarcely know which of the two preponderates. The one is, that they are waiting the ultimate determination of Parliament; the other, that of our distresses, by which I know the Commissioners went home not a little buoyed up, and, sorry I am to add, not without cause. What may be the effect of such large and frequent emissions, of the dissensions,—parties,—extravagance, and a general lax of public virtue, Heaven alone can tell! I am afraid even to think of It. But it appears as clear to me as ever the Sun did in its meridian brightness, that America never stood in more eminent need of the wise, patriotic, and spirited exertions of her Sons than at this period; and if it is not a sufficient cause for genl. lamentation, my misconception of the matter impresses it too strongly upon me, that the States, separately, are too much engaged in their local concerns, and have too many of their ablest men withdrawn from the general council, for the good of the common weal. In a word, I think our political system may be compared to the mechanism of a clock, and that our conduct should derive a lesson from it; for it answers no good purpose to keep the smaller wheels in order, if the greater one,

which is the support and prime mover of the whole, is neglected.

How far the latter is the case, it does not become me to pronounce; but, as there can be no harm in a pious wish for the good of one's Country, I shall offer it as mine, that each State wd. not only choose, but absolutely compel their ablest men to attend Congress; and that they would instruct them to go into a thorough investigation of the causes, that have produced so many disagreeable effects in the army and Country; in a word, that public abuses should be corrected & an entire reformation worked. Without these, it does not in my Judgment require the spirit of divination to foretell the consequences of the present administration; nor to how little purpose the States individually are framing constitutions, providing laws, and filling offices with the abilities of their ablest men. These, if the great whole is mismanaged, must sink in the general wreck, and will carry with it the remorse of thinking, that we are lost by our own folly and negligence, or the desire perhaps of living in ease and tranquillity during the expected accomplishment of so great a revolution, in the effecting of which the greatest abilities, and the honestest men our (i.e. the American) world affords, ought to be employed.[1]

[1] "It gives me very singular pleasure to find, that you have again taken a seat in Congress. I think there never was a time, when cool and dispassionate reasoning, strict attention and application, great integrity, and, (if it was in the nature of things, unerring) wisdom, were more to be wished for, than the present. Our affairs, according to my judgment, are now

It is much to be feared, my dear Sir, that the States, in their separate capacities, have very inadequate ideas of the present danger. Removed (some of them) far distant from the scene of action, and seeing and hearing such publications only, as flatter their wishes, they conceive that the contest is at an end, and that to regulate the government and police of their own State is all that remains to be done; but it is devoutly to be wished, that a sad reverse of this may not fall upon them like a thunder-clap, that is little expected. I do not mean to designate particular States. I wish to cast no reflections upon any one. The Public believe (and, if they do *believe* it, the fact might almost as well be so), that the States at this time are badly represented, and that the great and important concerns of the nation are horribly conducted, for want either of abilities or application in the members, or through the discord & party views of some individuals. That they should be so, is to be lamented more at this time than formerly, as we are far advanced in the dispute, and, in the opinn. of many, drawg. to a happy period; have the eyes of Europe upon us, and I am persuaded many political spies to watch, discover our situa-

come to a crisis, and requires no small degree of political skill to steer clear of those shelves and Rocks, which, tho deeply buried, may wreck our hopes and throw us upon some inhospitable shore. Unanimity in our Councils, disinterestedness in our pursuits, and steady perseverance in our national duty, are the only means to avoid misfortunes. If they come upon us after these, we shall have the consolation of knowing that we have done our best. The rest is with the Gods."—*Washington to Thomas Nelson*, 15 March, 1779.

tion and give information of our weaknesses and wants. The story you have related, of a proposal to redeem ye paper money at its present depreciated value, has also come to my ears; but I cannot vouch for the authenticity of it.

I am very happy to hear, that the Assembly of Virginia have put the completion of their regiments upon a footing so apparently certain; but, as one great defect of your past Laws for this purpose has lain in the mode of getting men to the army, I hope that effectual measures are pointed out in the present to remedy the evil, and bring forward all that shall be raised. The embargo upon provisions is a most salutary measure, as I am afraid a sufficiency of flour will not be obtained, even with money of higher estimation than ours. Adieu, my dear Sir. I am, &c.

P. S. Phila: 30th. This letter was to have gone by Post from Middlebrook but missed that conveyance, since which I have come to this place at the request of Congress whence I shall soon return.

I have seen nothing since I came here (on the 22d Inst.) to change my opinion of Men or Measrs., but abundant reason to be convinced that our affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous, and deplorable condition than they have been in since the commencement of the War.—By a faithful laborer then in the cause—By a Man who is daily injuring his private Estate without even the smallest earthly advantage not common to all in case of

a favorable Issue to the dispute—By one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly and sees or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin, you are beseeched most earnestly, my dear Colo. Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavoring to rescue your Country by (let me add) sending your ablest and best Men to Congress—these characters must not slumber nor sleep at home in such times of pressing danger—they must not content themselves in the enjoyment of places of honor or profit in their own Country while the common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable (if a remedy is not soon applied) ruin in which theirs also must ultimately be involved. If I was to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of Men, from what I have seen, and heard, and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation & extravagance seems to have laid fast hold of most of them.—That speculation—peculation—and an insatiable thirst for riches seems to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of Men. —That party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day whilst the momentous concerns of an empire—a great and accumulated debt—ruined finances—depreciated money —and want of credit (which in their consequences is the want of everything) are but secondary considerations and postponed from day to day—from week to week as if our affairs wear the most promising aspect—after drawing this picture, which from my Soul I believe to be a true one, I need

not repeat to you that I am alarmed and wish to see my Countrymen roused.—I have no resentments, nor do I mean to point at any particular characters,—this I can declare upon my honor for I have every attention paid me by Congress that I can possibly expect and have reason to think that I stand well in their estimation, but in the present situation of things I cannot help asking—Where is Mason—Wythe—Jefferson—Nicholas — Pendleton—Nelson—and another I could name—and why, if you are sufficiently impressed with your danger do you not (as New Yk. has done in the case of Mr. Jay) send an extra member or two for at least a certain limited time till the great business of the Nation is put upon a more respectable and happy establishmt.—Your Money is now sinking 5 pr. ct. a day in this city; and I shall not be surprized if in the course of a few months a total stop is put to the currency of it.—And yet an Assembly —a concert—a Dinner—or supper (that will cost three or four hundred pounds) will not only take Men off from acting in but even from thinking of this business while a great part of the Officers of ye Army from absolute necessity are quitting the service and ye more virtuous few rather than do this are sinking by sure degrees into beggary and want.—I again repeat to you that this is not an exaggerated acct.; that it is an alarming one I do not deny, and confess to you that I feel more real distress on acct. of the prest. appearances of things than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute—but it is time to bid you

once more adieu.—Providence has heretofore taken me up when all other means and hope seemed to be departing from me in this. I will confide.—Yours—&c.[1]

TO GEORGE MASON

MIDDLEBROOK, 27 March, 1779.

DEAR SIR:

* * * Though it is not in my power to devote much time to a private corrispondence owing to the multiplicity of public Letters & other business I have to read, write, & transact; yet, I can with great truth assure you that it would afford me very singular pleasure to be favored at all times with your sentiments in a leizure hour upon public matters of general concernment, as well as those which more immediately respect your own State, if proper conveyances would render prudent a free communication. I am particularly desirous of it at this time because I view things very differently, I fear, from what the people in general do, who seem

[1] "It gives me sincere pleasure to find, that there is likely to be a coalition of the Whigs in your State [Pennsylvania], (a few only excepted,) and that the Assembly of it are so well disposed to second your endeavors in bringing those murderers of our cause, the monopolizers, forestallers, and engrossers, to condign punishment. It is much to be lamented, that each State long ere this has not hunted them down as the pests of society, and the greatest enemies we have to the happiness of America. I would to God, that one of the most atrocious in each State was hung in gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman. No punishment, in my opinion, is too great for the man, who can build his greatness upon his country's ruin."—*Washington to Reed*, December 12, 1778.

to think the contest is at an end, & to make money, and get places the only things now remaining to do. I have seen without despondency even for a momt.—the hours which America have stiled her gloomy ones, but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities that I have thought her liberties in such eminent danger as at present.

Friends and Foes seem now to combine to pull down the goodly fabric we have hitherto been raising at the expense of so much time, blood, & treasure—& unless the bodies politic will exert themselves to bring things back to first principles—correct abuses—& punish our internal Foes inevitable ruin must follow,—indeed we seem to be verging so fast to destruction that I am filled with sensations to which I have been a stranger till within these three months.

Our Enemy, behold with exultation & joy, how effectually we labor for their benefit; and from being in a state of absolute despair, and on the point of evacuating America, are now on tiptoe—nothing therefore, in my judgement, can save us but a total reformation in our own conduct or some decisive turn to affairs in Europe. The former alas! to our shame be it spoken! is less likely to happen than the latter; as it is more consistent with the views of the speculators—various tribes of money makers & stock jobbers of all denominations to continue the War for their own private emolument without considering that their avarice & thirst for gain must plunge every thing, including themselves in one common ruin.

Were I to endulge my present feelings, & give a loose to that freedom of expression which my unreserved friendship for you would prompt me to, I should say a great deal on this subject.

But letters are liable to so many accidents, & the sentiments of men in office sought after by the enemy with so much avidity, & besides, conveying useful knowledge (if they get into their hands) for the superstructure of their plans, is often perverted to the wors[t] of purposes that I shall be somewhat reserved notwithstanding this letter goes by a private hand to Mount Vernon.—I cannot refrain lamenting, however, in the most poignant terms, the fatal policy too prevalent in most of the States of employing their ablest men at home in posts of honor or profit, till the great National Interest is fixed upon a solid basis.—To me, it appears no unjust simile to compare the affairs of this great Continent to the mechanism of a clock, each state representing some one or other of the smaller parts of it which they are endeavoring to put in fine order without considering how useless & unavailing their labor is unless the great Wheel, or Spring which is to set the whole in motion is also well attended to—& kept in good order—I allude to no particular state—nor do I mean to cast reflections upon any of them—nor ought I, it may be said to do so upon their representatives; but, as it is a fact too notorious to be concealed that C—— [Congress] is rent by Party—that much business of a trifling nature & personal concernment withdraw their attention from matters of

great national moment at this critical period.—When it is also known that idleness & dissipation take place of close attention & application, a man who wishes well to the liberties of his Country and desires to see its rights established cannot avoid crying out where are our men of abilities? Why do they not come forth to save their Country? let this voice my dear Sir call upon you—Jefferson & others—do not from a mistaken opinion that we are about to set down under our own vine, & our own fig tree, let our hitherto noble struggle end in ignom'y—believe me when I tell you there is danger of it—I have pretty good reasons for thinking that Administration a little while ago had resolved to give the matter up, and negotiate a peace with us upon almost any terms; but I shall be much mistaken if they do not now from the present state of our currency dissentions & other circumstances push matters to the utmost extremity—nothing I am sure will prevent it but the interposition of Spain, & their disappointed hope from Russia.

I thank you most cordially for your kind offer of rendering me services. I shall without reserve, as heretofore, call upon you whenever instances occur that may require it, being with the sincerest regard, &c.

TO JAMES WARREN, IN MASSACHUSETTS

MIDDLEBROOK, 31 March, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

* * * Our conflict is not likely to cease so

soon as every good man would wish. The measure of iniquity is not yet filled; and, unless we can return a little more to first principles, and act a little more upon patriotic grounds, I do not know when it will, or what may be the issue of the contest. Speculation, Peculation, Engrossing, forestalling, with all their concomitants, afford too many melancholy proofs of the decay of public virtue, and too glaring instances of its being the interest and desire of too many, who would wish to be thought friends, to continue the war. Nothing, I am convinced, but the depreciation of our currency, proceeding in a great measure from the foregoing causes, aided by stockjobbing and party dissensions, has fed the hopes of the Enemy and kept the B. arms in America to this day. They do not scruple to declare this themselves, and add, that we shall be our own conquerors. Cannot our common country, Ama., possess virtue enough to disappoint them? Is the paltry consideration of a little dirty pelf to individuals to be placed in competition with the essential rights and liberties of the present generation, and of millions yet unborn? Shall a few designing men, for their own aggrandizement, & to gratify their own avarice, overset the goodly fabric we have been rearing at the expense of so much time, blood, & treasure? And shall we at last become the victims of our own abominable lust of gain? Forbid it Heaven! Forbid it all & every State in the Union! by enacting & enforcing efficacious laws for checking the growth of these monstrous evils, & restoring matters in some degree

to the pristine state they were in at the commencement of the war!

Our cause is noble. It is the cause of mankind, and the danger to it is to be apprehended from ourselves. Shall we slumber and sleep, then, while we should be punishing those miscreants, who have brot. these troubles upon us, & who are aimg. to continue us in them; while we should be striving to fill our battalions, & devising ways and means to appreciate the currency, on the credit of wch. every thing depends? I hope not. Let vigorous measures be adopted; not to limit the prices of articles, for this I believe is inconsistent with the very nature of things, and impracticable in itself; but to punish speculators, forestallers, & extortioners, and above all to sink the money by heavy taxes, to promote public & private economy, Encourage manufactures &c. Measures of this sort, gone heartily into by the several States, would strike at once at the root of all our evils, & give the *coup de grace* to British hope of subjugating this continent, either by their arms or their arts. The first, as I have before observed, they acknowledge is unequal to the task; the latter I am sure will be so, if we are not lost to every thing that is good & virtuous. * * *[1]

[1] "It is most devoutly to be wished that the several States would adopt some vigorous measures for the purpose of giving credit to the paper currency and punishment of speculators, forestallers and others who are preying upon the vitals of this great Country and putting every thing to the utmost hazard. Alas! what is virtue come to—what a miserable change has four years produced in the temper & dispositions of the Sons of

TO GOVERNOR TRUMBULL [1]

HEAD QUARTERS, MORRIS-TOWN, 8 January, 1780.

DEAR SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose your Excellency the copy of a letter I have just received from the late Commissary General by which you will see upon how ill a footing our future prospects of supplies are, particularly with respect to meat. This corresponds with representations from every quarter and with what we actually feel. The army has been near three months on a short allowance of bread; within a fortnight past almost perishing. They have been sometimes without bread, sometimes without meat; at no time with much of either, and often without both. They have borne their distress, (in which the officers have shared a common lot with the men,) with as much fortitude as human nature is capable of; but they have been at last brought to such a dreadful extremity that no authority or influence of the officers—no virtue or patience in the men themselves, could any longer restrain them from obeying the dictates of their sufferings. The soldiery have in several instances plundered the neighboring inhabitants even of their necessary subsistence. Without an immedi-

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America! It really shocks me to think of it!"—*Washington to Burwell Bassett*, 22 April, 1779.

[1] Governor Trumbull was one of the most interesting characters in the Revolutionary War. He was in public life more than fifty years, during fourteen of which he was governor of Connecticut. In October, 1783, he declined re-election, being then in the seventy-third year of his age.

ate remedy this evil would soon become intolerable, and unhappily for us, we have no prospect of relief through the ordinary channels. We are reduced to this alternative, either to let the army disband or to call upon the several counties of this State to furnish a proportion of cattle and grain for the immediate supply of our wants. If the magistrates refuse their aid, we shall be obliged to have recourse to a military impress. But this, Sir, is an expedient as temporary in its relief as it is disagreeable in its execution and injurious in its tendency. An Army is not to be supported by measures of this kind. Something of a more permanent and effectual nature must be done. The legislative authority of the respective States must interpose its aid. The public treasury is exhausted; we have no magazines anywhere that I know of; the public officers have neither money nor credit to procure supplies. I assure your Excellency, as far as my knowledge extends, this is a faithful representation of our affairs. Our situation is more than serious, it is alarming. I doubt not your Excellency will view it in the same light, and that the Legislature of the State of Connecticut will give a fresh proof of their wisdom and zeal for the common cause by their exertions upon the present occasion; and I hope I shall be thought to be justified by circumstances when I add, that unless each State enters into the business of supplying the army, as a matter seriously interesting to our political salvation, we may shortly be plunged into misfortunes from which it may be impossible to recover.

I have made a similar representation to all the States on which we depend for supplies. Maryland has passed an act which promises us much assistance in the article of flour and forage, though it must be some time before we can feel the benefit of it. She has appointed commissioners in each County with full power to purchase or impress all the grain in the State, more than is sufficient for the use of the inhabitants, and has interested them in a vigorous execution of the Commission.

I flatter myself the other States will make equal exertions; and then we shall escape the calamities with which we are now threatened.[1]

I have the honor to be, &c.

[1] "The situation of the army with respect to supplies is beyond description alarming. It has been five or six weeks past on half allowance, and we have not more than three days bread at a third allowance on hand, nor anywhere within reach. When this is exhausted we must depend on the precarious gleanings of the neighboring country. Our magazines are absolutely empty everywhere and our Commissaries entirely destitute of money or credit to replenish them. We have never experienced a like extremity at any period of the war. We have often felt temporary want from accidental delays in forwarding supplies, but we always had something in our magazines and the means of procuring more. Neither one nor the other is at present the case.

"This representation is the result of a minute examination of our resources. Unless some extraordinary and immediate exertions are made by the State from which we draw our supplies, there is every appearance that the army will infallibly disband in a fortnight. I think it my duty to lay this candid view of our situation before your Excellency, and to intreat the vigorous interposition of the State to rescue us from the danger of an event, which if it did not prove the total ruin of our affairs, would at least give them a shock from which they would not easily recover, and plunge us into a train of new and still more perplexing embarrassments than any we have

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRIS TOWN, 3 April, 1780.

SIR,

* * * Before I conclude, I think it my duty to touch upon the general situation of the army at this juncture. It is absolutely necessary Congress should be apprized of it, for it is difficult to forsee what may be the result; and, as very serious consequences are to be apprehended, I should not be justified in preserving silence. There never has been a stage of the war, in which the dissatisfaction has been so general or alarming.[1] It has lately, in particular instances, worn features of a very dangerous complexion. A variety of causes has con-

hitherto felt."—*Circular Letter to the Executives of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and Delaware*, 16 December, 1779.

"Our affairs are in so deplorable a condition (on the score of provisions) as to fill the mind with the most anxious & alarming fears. Such a situation, at all times to be lamented, is peculiarly unfortunate at this juncture, when there now is, or soon must be, a field opened for Enterprise.

"Circumstanced as things are, men half-starved, imperfectly cloathed, riotous, & robbing the country people of their subsistence from sheer necessity, I think it scarcely possible to embrace any momt. (however favourable in other respects,) for visiting the enemy on Staten Island; & yet, if this frost should have made a firm & solid bridge between them and us, I should be unwilling, indeed I cannot relinquish the idea of attempting it."—*Washington to Brigadier-General Irvine*, 9 January, 1780.

[1] "My sentiments concerning public affairs correspond too much with yours. The prospect, my Dear Baron, is gloomy, and the storm threatens. Not to have the anxieties you express, at the present juncture, would be not to feel that zeal and interest in our cause, by which all your whole conduct shows you to be actuated. But I hope we shall extricate ourselves, and bring everything to a prosperous issue. I have been so inured to difficulties in the course of this contest, that I have

tributed to this; The diversity in the terms of enlistments, the inequality of the rewards given for entering into the service, but still more the disparity in the provision made by the several States for the respective Troops. The system of State supplies, however in the commencement dictated by necessity, has proved in its operation pernicious beyond description. An army must be raised, paid, subsisted, and regulated upon an equal and uniform principle, or the confusions and discontents are endless. Little less than the dissolution of the army would have been long since the consequence of a different plan, had it not been for a spirit of patriotic virtue, both in officers and men, of which there are few examples, seconded by the unremitting pains that have been taken to compose and reconcile them to their situation. But these will not be able to hold out much longer against the influence of causes constantly operating, and every day with some new aggravation.

Some States, from their internal ability and local advantages, furnish their Troops pretty amply, not only with cloathing, but with many little comforts and conveniences; others supply them with some necessaries, but on a more contracted scale; while others have it in their power to do little or nothing at all. The officers and men in the routine of duty mix dayly and compare circumstances.

learned to look upon them with more tranquillity than formerly. Those, which now present themselves, no doubt require vigorous exertions to overcome them, and I am [far] from despairing of doing it."—*Washington to Baron Steuben*, 2 April, 1780.

Those, who fare worse than others, of course are dissatisfied, and have their resentment excited, not only against their own State, but against the Confederacy. They become disgusted with a service that makes such injurious distinctions. No arguments can persuade an officer it is justice he should be obliged to pay £— a yard for cloth, and other things in proportion, while another is furnished at part of the price. The officers resign, and we have now scarcely a sufficient number left to take care even of the fragments of corps which remain. The men have not this resource. They murmur, brood over their discontents, and have lately shown a disposition to enter into seditious combinations.

A new scene is now opening, which I fear will be productive of more troublesome effects, than any thing that has hitherto taken place. Some of the States have adopted the measure of making good the depreciation of the money to their Troops, as well for the past as for the future. If this does not become general, it is so striking a point, that the consequences must be unspeakably mischievous. I enter not into the propriety of this measure in the view of finance, but confine myself to its operation upon the army. Neither do I mean to insinuate, that the liberality of particular States has been carried to a blamable length. The evil I mean to point out is the inequality of the different provisions, and this is inherent in the present system. It were devoutly to be wished, a plan could be devised by which every thing relating to the army could be

conducted on a general principle, under the direction of Congress. This alone can give harmony and consistence to our military establishment, and I am persuaded it will be infinitely conducive to public economy. I hope I shall not be thought to have exceeded my duty in the unreserved manner in which I have exhibited our situation. Congress, I flatter myself, will have the goodness to believe, that I have no other motives than a zeal for the public service, a desire to give them every necessary information, and an apprehension for the consequences of the evils we now experience. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

HEAD-QRS., MORRIS TOWN,
27 May, 1780.

SIR,

It is with infinite pain I inform Congress, that we are reduced again to a situation of extremity for want of meat. On several days of late, the Troops have been entirely destitute of any, and for a considerable time past they have been at best, at half, a quarter, an Eighth allowance of this essential article of provision. The men have borne their distress in general with a firmness and patience never exceeded, and every commendation is due the officers for encouraging them to it, by exhortation and by example. They have suffered equally with the men, and their relative situations considered, rather more. But such reiterated, constant in-

stances of want are too much for the soldiery, and cannot but lead to alarming consequences. Accordingly Two Regiments of the Connecticut line mutinied, and got under arms on Thursday night. And but for the timely exertions of some of their officers, who got notice of it, it might have been the case with the whole, with a determination to return home, or at best to gain subsistence at the point of the bayonet. After a good deal of expostulation by their officers and some of the Pennsylvania line, who had come to their assistance, and after parading their regiments upon the occasion, the men were prevailed on to go to their huts; but a few nevertheless turned out again with their packs, who are now confined. Colonel Meigs, who acted with great propriety in endeavoring to suppress the mutiny, was struck by one of the soldiers. I wish our situation was better with respect to provision in other quarters, but it is not. They are in as great distress at West Point to the full; and, by a Letter of the 19th from Colo. Van Schaick at Albany, he informs me, that the Garrison of Fort Schuyler had then only a month's supply on hand, and that there was no more provision to send them. From this detail Congress will see how distressing our situation is; but there are other matters which still contribute to render it more alarming. * * *

Nothing is farther from my wishes, than to add in the smallest degree to the distresses or embarrassments of Congress on any occasion, and more particularly on one where I have every reason to fear they have it not in their power to administer the

least relief. Duty however compels me to add one matter more to those I have already detailed. I have been informed by the Two Colonels of the Pennsylvania line, in whom I have the utmost confidence, who were called to assist Colo: Meigs to suppress the mutiny on Thursday night, that in the course of their expostulations the troops very pointedly mentioned, besides their distresses for provision, their not being paid for Five months; and, what is of a still more serious and delicate nature in our present circumstances, they mentioned the great depreciation of the money, it's being of little or no value at all, and yet, if they should be paid, that it would be in this way, and according to the usual amount, without an adequate allowance for the depreciation. They were reasoned with, and every argument used that these gentlemen and Colo: Meigs could devise, either to interest their pride or their passions; they were reminded of their past good conduct; of the late assurances of Congress; of the objects for which they were contending; but their answer was, that their sufferings were too great, and that they wanted present relief, and some present substantial recompense for their services. This matter, I confess, tho' I have heard of no further uneasiness among the men, has given me infinitely more concern, than any thing that has ever happened, and strikes me as the most important, because we have no means at this time, that I know of, for paying the troops, but in Continental money; and as it is evidently impracticable, from the immense quantity

it would require, to pay them in this, as much as would make up the depreciation. Every possible means in my power will be directed on this and on all occasions, as they ever have been, to preserve order and promote the public service; but in such an accumulation of distresses, amidst such a variety of embarrassments, which surround us on all sides, this will be found at least extremely difficult. If the troops could only be comfortably supplied with provisions, it would be a great point, and such as would with the event we expect soon to take place, the arrival of the armament from France to our succor, make them forget or at least forego many matters, which make a part of their anxiety and present complaints. I am, &c.

P. S. I enclose Your Excellency three New York Gazettes; also a small printed paper found in our camp, containing an address to our soldiers by the enemy, to induce them to desert. It is most likely, that many copies were dispersed, and that they have had a considerable effect, tho' this is the only one that has been seen by the officers, notwithstanding their pains to find them. Your Excellency will see the points on which the enemy particularly found their addresses.[1]

[1] "The time is at length arrived, when all the artifices, and falsehoods of the Congress and of your commanders can no longer conceal from you, the misery of your situation; you are neither Clothed, Fed nor Paid; your numbers are wasting away by Sickness, Famine, Nakedness, and rapidly so by the period of your stipulated Services, being in general expired, this is then the moment to fly from slavery and fraud.

"I am happy in acquainting the old countrymen, that the

TO PRESIDENT REED

HEAD-QUARTERS, BERGEN COUNTY,
4 July, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR,

Motives of friendship not less than of public good, induce me with freedom to give you my sentiments on a matter, which interests you personally as well as the good of the common cause. I flatter myself you will receive what I say in the same spirit which dictates it, and that it will have all the influence circumstances will possibly permit.

The Legislature of Pennsylvania has vested you, in case of necessity, with a power of declaring Martial Law throughout the State, to enable you to take such measures as the exigency may demand. So far the Legislature has done its part. Europe, America, the State itself, will look to you for the rest. The power vested in you will admit of all the latitude, that could be desired, and may be made to mean any thing, the public safety may require. If it is not exerted proportionably, you will be responsible for the consequences. Nothing,

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affairs of Ireland are fully settled, and that Great Britain and Ireland are firmly united, as well from interest as from affection: I need not now tell you who are born in America, that you have been cheated and abused; and you are both sensible, that in order to procure your liberty you must quit your leaders, and join your real friends who scorn to impose upon you, and who will receive you with open arms, kindly forgiving all your errors.

"You are told that you are surrounded by a numerous militia, this is also false—associate them together, make use of your firelocks and join the British Army, where you will be permitted to dispose of yourselves as you please."—*Ford.*

my dear Sir, can be more delicate and critical than your situation; a full discretionary power lodged in your hands in conjunction with the Council; great expectations in our allies and in the People of this country; ample means in the State for great exertions of every kind; a powerful party on one hand to take advantage of every opening to prejudice you, on the other popular indolence and avarice, averse to every measure inconsistent with present ease and present interest. In this dilemma, there is a seeming danger whatever side you take; it remains to choose that, which has least real danger and will best promote the public weal. This in my opinion clearly is to exert the powers entrusted to you with a boldness and vigor suited to the emergency.

In general I esteem it a good maxim, that the best way to preserve the confidence of the people durably is to promote their true interest. There are particular exigencies when this maxim has peculiar force. When any great object is in view, the popular mind is roused into expectation, and prepared to make sacrifices both of ease and property. If those, to whom they confide the management of their affairs, do not call them to make these sacrifices, and the object is not attained, or they are involved in the reproach of not having contributed as much as they ought to have done towards it, they will be mortified at the disappointment, they will feel the censure, and their resentment will rise against those, who, with sufficient authority, have omitted to do what their interest and their honor

required. Extensive powers not exercised as far as was necessary have, I believe, scarcely ever failed to ruin the possessor. The Legislature and the People in your case, would be very glad to excuse themselves by condemning you. You would be assailed with blame from every quarter, and your enemies would triumph.

The party opposed to you in the Government are making great efforts. I am told the bank, established for supplying the army, is principally under the auspices of that party. It will undoubtedly give them great credit with the People, and you have no effectual way to counterbalance this, but by employing all your influence and authority to render services proportioned to your station. Hitherto I confess to you frankly, my dear Sir, I do not think your affairs are in the train which might be wished; and if Pennsylvania does not do its part fully, it is of so much importance in the general scale, that we must fail of success, or limit our views to mere defence. I have conversed with some gentlemen on the measure of filling your battalions. They seemed to think you could not exceed what the Legislature had done for this purpose. I am of very different sentiment. The establishment of Martial Law implies, in my judgment, the right of calling any part of your citizens into military service, and in any manner which may be found expedient; and I have no doubt the draft may be executed.

I write to you with the freedom of friendship, and I hope you will esteem it the truest mark I

could give you of it. In this view, whether you think my observations well founded or not, the motive will, I am persuaded, render them agreeable. In offering my respects to Mrs. Reed I must be permitted to accompany them with a tender of my very warm acknowledgments to her and you for the civilities and attention both of you have been pleased to show Mrs. Washington,—and for the honor you have done me in calling the young Christian by my name. With the greatest regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO FIELDING LEWIS

BERGEN COUNTY, JERSEY,
6 July, 1780.

* * * * * *

The Gazettes will have given you an account of the enemy's movements on the 7th and 23d of last month from Elizabethtown-point, and of their having taken post there from the one date to the other; there can be no occasion therefore to detail the account in this place; but I may lament in the bitterness of my soul, that the fatal policy which has pervaded all our measures from the beginning of the war, and which no experience however dear bought can change, should have reduced our army to so low an ebb, as not to have given a more effectual opposition to those movements than we did; or that we should be obliged to be removing our stores from place to place to keep them out of the way of the enemy instead of driving that enemy from our

country—but our weakness invited these insults, and why they did not *attempt at least* to do more than they did, I cannot conceive. Nor will it be easy to make any one at the distance of 400 miles believe that our army, weakened as it is by the expiration of men's enlistments, should at times be five or six days together without meat—then as many without bread—and once or twice, two or three days together without either—and that, in the same army, there should be numbers of men with scarcely as much cloathing as would cover their nakedness, and at least a fourth of the whole with not even the shadow of a blanket, severe as the winter has been. Under these circumstances it is no difficult matter to conceive what a time I must have had to keep up appearances and prevent the most disastrous consequences.

It may be asked how these things have come to pass? the answer is plain—and may be ascribed to the want of system, not to say foresight—originally (if it is not still the case with some) to a fatal jealousy (under our circumstances) of a standing army—by which means we neglected to obtain soldiers for the war when zeal and patriotism run high, and men were eager to engage for a trifle or for nothing; the consequence of which has been that we have protracted the war—expended millions and tens of millions of pounds which might have been saved, and have a new army to raise and discipline once or twice a year, and with which we can undertake nothing because we have nothing to build upon, as the men are slipping from us

every day by means of their expiring enlistments. To these fundamental errors, may be added another which I expect will prove our ruin, and that is the relinquishment of Congressional powers to the States individually—all the business is now *attempted,* for it is not done, by a timid kind of recommendation from Congress to the States; the consequence of which is, that instead of pursuing one uniform system, which in the execution shall corrispond in time and manner, each State undertakes to determine—

1st. Whether they will comply or not.

2nd. In what manner they will do it, and

3d. In what time—by which means scarcely any one measure is, or can be executed, while great expences are incurred and the willing and zealous States ruined. In a word our measures are not under the influence and direction of one council, but thirteen, each of which is actuated by local views and politics, without considering the fatal consequences of not complying with plans which the united wisdom of America in its representative capacity have digested, or the unhappy tendency of delay, mutilation or alteration. I do not scruple to add, and I give it decisively as my opinion—that unless the States will content themselves with a full and well-chosen representation in Congress and vest that body with absolute powers in all matters relative to the great purposes of war, and of general concern (by which the States unitedly are affected, reserving to themselves all matters of local and internal polity for the regulation of order and

good government) we are attempting an impossibility, and very soon shall become (if it is not already the case) a many-headed monster—a heterogenious mass—that never will or can steer to the same point. The contest among the different States *now* is not which shall do most for the common cause—but which shall do least, hence arise disappointments and delay, one State waiting to see what another will or will not do, through fear of doing too much, and by their deliberations, alterations, and sometimes refusals to comply with the requisitions of Congress, after that Congress spent months in reconciling (as far as it is possible) jarring interests, in order to frame their resolutions, as far as the nature of the case will admit, upon principles of equality.[1]

[1] "Certain I am, unless Congress speak in a more decisive tone, unless they are vested with powers by the several States competent to the great purposes of war, or assume them as matter of right, and they and the States respectively act with more energy than they hitherto have done, that our cause is lost. We can no longer drudge on in the old way. By ill timing the adoption of measures, by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies, we incur enormous expenses and derive no benefit from them. One State will comply with a requisition of Congress; another neglects to do it; a third executes it by halves; and all differ either in the manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are always working up hill, and ever shall be; and, while such a system as the present one, or rather want of one prevails, we shall ever be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage.

"This, my dear Sir, is plain language to a member of Congress; but it is the language of truth and friendship. It is the result of long thinking, close application, and strict observation. I see one head gradually changing into thirteen. I see one army branching into thirteen, which, instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controlling power of the

There is another source from whence much of our present distress, and past difficulties have flowed, and that is the hope and expectation which seizes the States, and Congress toward the close of every year, that Peace must take place in the Winter—This never fails to produce an apathy which lulls them into ease and security, and involves the most distressing consequences at the opening of every campaign. We may rely upon it that we shall never have Peace till the enemy are convinced that we are in a condition to carry on the war. It is no new maxim in politics that for a nation to obtain Peace, or insure it, it must be prepared for war.

But it is time for me to recollect myself and quit a subject which would require a folio volume to illucidate, and expose the folly of our measures. To rectify past blunders is impossible, but we might profit by the experience of them, tho' even here I doubt, as I am furnished with many instances to the contrary. * * *

TO MAJOR-GENERAL HEATH

ROBINSON'S HOUSE, 26 September, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

* * * I cannot conclude, without informing

United States, are considering themselves as dependent on their respective States. In a word, I see the powers of Congress declining too fast for the consideration and respect, which are due to them as the great representative body of America, and I am fearful of the consequences."—*Washington to Joseph Jones, in Congress*, 31 May, 1780.

you of an event, which has happened here, and which will strike you with astonishment and indignation. Major-General Arnold has gone to the enemy. He had had an interview with Major André, adjutant-general of the British army, and had put into his possession a state of our army, of the garrison at this post, of the number of men considered as necessary for the defence of it, a return of the ordnance, and the disposition of the artillery corps, in case of an alarm. By a most providential interposition, Major André was taken in returning to New York, with all those papers in General Arnold's handwriting, who, hearing of the matter, kept it secret, and left his quarters immediately, under pretence of going over to West Point on Monday forenoon, about an hour before my arrival; then pushed down the river in the barge, which was not discovered till I had returned from West Point in the afternoon; and, when I received the first information of Major André's captivity, measures were instantly taken to apprehend him; but, before the officers, sent for the purpose, could reach Verplanck's Point, he had passed it with a flag, and got on board the Vulture ship of war, which lay a few miles below. He knew of my approach, and that I was visiting, with the Marquis, the north and middle redoubts, and from this circumstance was so straitened in point of time, that I believe he carried with him but very few if any material papers, though he has a very precise knowledge of the affairs of the post. The gentlemen of General Arnold's family, I have

the greatest reason to believe, were not privy in the least degree to the measures he was carrying on, or to his escape. I am, dear Sir, with very great esteem and regard, yours, &c.

TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL JOHN CADWALADER

HEAD-QRS., TAPPAN, 5 October, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I have to acknowledge and thank you for your obliging and friendly letter of the 20th ulto.—It came to this place in my absence from the army and during my necessary detention at West Point on a very interesting but disgraceful incident in our military occurrences.

Altho I have but little leizure for the gratification of private correspondencies, I beg you to be assured, that, from a warmth of friendship, any letters of yours will be gratefully accepted; and it is with much pleasure I receive fresh assurances of your regard and attachment to me. We are now drawing an inactive campaign to a close; the beginning of which appeared pregnant with events of a favorable complexn. I hoped, but I hoped in vain, that a prospect was displaying, which wd. enable me to fix a period to my military pursuits, and restore me to domestic life. The favorable disposition of Spain, the promised succor from France, the combined force in the West Indies, the declaration of Russia (acceded to by other powers of Europe, and humiliating to the naval pride and

power of Great Britain),[1] the superiority of France and Spain by sea in Europe, the Irish claims and English disturbances, formed in the aggregate an opinion in my breast, (which is not very susceptible of peaceful dreams,) that the hour of deliverance was not far distant; for that, however unwilling Great B. might be to yield the point, it would not be in her power to continue the contest. But alas! these prospects, flattering as they were, have prov'd delusory, and I see nothing before us but accumulating distress.

We have been half of our time without provision, and are likely to continue so. We have no magazines, nor money to form them; and in a little time we shall have no men, if we had money to pay them. We have lived upon expedients till we can live no longer. In a word, the history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary devices, instead of system and œconomy. It is in vain, however, to look back, nor is it our business to do so. Our case is not desperate, if virtue exists in the people, and there is wisdom among our rulers.

[1] In this war, which was waged between France, Spain, and the United States on the one side and Great Britain on the other, the latter power showed little disposition to regard the rights of neutrals. In consequence, the Empress of Russia, on February 28, 1780, issued a declaration setting forth a series of principles or rules for the guidance of her naval officers in the protection of the neutral rights of her subjects. Other nations were invited to join in her declaration, and Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Prussia, Austria, Portugal and the Two Sicilies did so. The league thus formed is known as the Armed Neutrality of 1780. See Moore, *Digest of International Law*, vii., 558.

But to suppose that this great revolution can be accomplished by a temporary army, that this army will be subsisted by State supplies, and that taxation alone is adequate to our wants, is in my opinion absurd, and as unreasonable as to expect an Inversion in the order of nature to accommodate itself to our views. If it was necessary, it could easily be proved to any person of a moderate share of understanding, that an annual army or an army raised on the spur of the occasion, besides being unqualified for the end designed, is, in various ways which could be enumerated, ten times more expensive than a permanent body of men, under good organization and military discipline, which never was nor never will be the case of new Troops. A thousand arguments, resulting from experience and the nature of things, might also be adduced to prove, that the army, if it is to depend upon State supplies, must disband or starve; and that taxation alone, (especially at this late hour,) cannot furnish the means to carry on the War. Is it not time then to retract from error, and benefit by experience? Or do we want further proof of the ruinous system we have pertinaciously adhered to? * * *

TO LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN LAURENS

Hd-Qrs., Passaic Falls,
13 October, 1780.

My Dear Laurens,

* * * In no instance since the commencement of the war, has the interposition of Providence ap-

peared more remarkably conspicuous than in the rescue of the post and garrison of West point from Arnold's villanous perfidy. How far he meant to involve me in the catastrophe of this place, does not appear by any indubitable evidence; and I am rather inclined to think he did not wish to hazard the more important object of his treachery, by attempting to combine two events, the lesser of which might have marr'd the greater. A combination of extraordinary circumstances, and unaccountable deprivation of presence of mind in a man of the first abilities, and the virtue of three militia men, threw the adjutant-general of the British forces, (with full proofs of Arnold's treachery,) into our hands. But for the egregious folly, or the bewildered conception, of Lieut.-Colonel Jameson, who seemed lost in astonishment, and not to have known what he was doing, I should undoubtedly have got Arnold. André has met his fate, and with that fortitude, which was to be expected from an accomplished man and gallant officer; but I am mistaken if, at *this* time, "Arnold is undergoing the torment of a mental Hell." [1] He wants feeling. From some traits of his character, which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in villany, and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that, while his faculties will en-

[1] Alluding to a passage in Colonel Laurens's letter, in which he said: "André has, I suppose, paid the forfeit which public justice demanded. Example will derive new force from his conspicuous character. Arnold must undergo a punishment comparatively more severe in the permanent, increasing torment of a mental hell."—October 4th.—*Sparks.*

able him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse. * * *

TO LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN LAURENS [1]

NEW WINDSOR, 15 January, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

In compliance with your request I shall commit to writing the result of our conferences on the present state of American affairs, in which I have given you my ideas with that freedom and explicitness, which the objects of your commission, my entire confidence in you, and the exigency demand. To me it appears evident:

1st. That, considering the diffused population of these States, the consequent difficulty of drawing together its resources, the composition and temper of *a part* of the inhabitants, the want of a sufficient stock of national wealth as a foundation for reve-

[1] In conformity with the instructions from Congress to Colonel Laurens, that he should consult General Washington on the objects of his mission before his departure for France, he proceeded to head-quarters for that purpose. The substance of their consultations was embodied in the form of a letter, which it was intended Colonel Laurens should use in such a manner as he might think proper. He introduced copious extracts from it into a memorial, which he presented to Count de Vergennes, and which is contained in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, vol. ix., p. 211. Those extracts differ in some slight particulars from the copy here printed, which is taken from General Washington's letter-books. The original letter, in the handwriting of General Washington, was likewise sent to Count de Vergennes, by Colonel Laurens or Dr. Franklin, and is still preserved among the American Papers in the Archives of Foreign Affairs in Paris.—*Sparks.*

nue, and the almost total extinction of commerce, the efforts we have been compelled to make for carrying on the war have exceeded the natural abilities of this country, and by degrees brought it to a crisis, which renders immediate and efficacious succors from abroad indispensable to its safety.

2dly. That, notwithstanding, from the confusion always attendant on a revolution, from our having had governments to frame and every species of civil and military institutions to create, from that inexperience in affairs necessarily incident to a nation in its commencement, some errors may have been committed in the administration of our finances, to which a part of our embarrassments are to be attributed; yet they are principally to be ascribed to an essential defect of means, to the want of a sufficient stock of wealth, as mentioned in the first article, which, continuing to operate, will make it impossible by any merely interior exertions to extricate ourselves from those embarrassments, restore public credit, and furnish the funds requisite for the support of the war.

3dly. That experience has demonstrated the impracticability long to maintain a paper credit without funds for its redemption. The depreciation of our currency was in the main a necessary effect of the want of those funds; and its restoration is impossible for the same reason, to which the general diffidence that has taken place among the people is an additional and, in the present state of things, an insuperable obstacle.

4thly. That the mode, which for want of money

has been substituted for supplying the army, by assessing a proportion of the productions of the earth, has hitherto been found ineffectual, has frequently exposed the army to the most calamitous distress, and, from its novelty and incompatibility with ancient habits, is regarded by the people as burthensome and oppressive, has excited serious discontents, and in some places alarming symptoms of opposition. This mode has, besides, many particular inconveniences, which contribute to make it inadequate to our wants, and ineligible but as an auxiliary.

5thly. That, from the best estimates of the annual expense of the war and the annual revenues which these States are capable of affording, there is a large balance to be supplied by public credit. The resource of domestic loans is inconsiderable, because there are properly speaking few moneyed men, and the few there are can employ their money more profitably otherwise; added to which, the instability of the currency and the deficiency of funds have impaired the public credit.

6thly. That the patience of the army, from an almost uninterrupted series of complicated distress, is now nearly exhausted, and their discontents matured to an extremity, which has recently had very disagreeable consequences, and which demonstrates the absolute necessity of speedy relief, a relief not within the compass of our means. You are too well acquainted with all their sufferings for want of clothing, for want of provisions, for want of pay.

7thly. That, the people being dissatisfied with the mode of supporting the war, there is cause to apprehend, that evils actually felt in the prosecution may weaken those sentiments which began it, founded, not on immediate sufferings, but on a speculative apprehension of future sufferings from the loss of their liberties. There is danger, that a commercial and free people, little accustomed to heavy burthens, pressed by impositions of a new and odious kind, may not make a proper allowance for the necessity of the conjuncture, and may imagine they have only exchanged one tyranny for another.

8thly. That, from all the foregoing considerations result, 1st, absolute necessity of an immediate, ample, and efficacious succor in money, large enough to be a foundation for substantial arrangements of finance, to revive public credit, and give vigor to future operations; 2dly, the vast importance of a decided effort of the allied arms on this continent, the ensuing campaign, to effectuate once for all the great objects of the alliance, the liberty and independence of these States. Without the first we may make a feeble and expiring effort the next campaign, in all probability the period to our opposition. With it, we should be in a condition to continue the war, as long as the obstinacy of the enemy might require. The first is essential to the latter; both combined would bring the contest to a glorious issue, crown the obligations, which America already feels to the magnanimity and generosity of her ally, and perpetuate the union by all

the ties of gratitude and affection, as well as mutual advantage, which alone can render it solid and indissoluble.

9thly. That, next to a loan of money, a constant naval superiority on these coasts is the object most interesting. This would instantly reduce the enemy to a difficult defensive, and, by removing all prospect of extending their acquisitions, would take away the motives for prosecuting the war. Indeed, it is not to be conceived how they could subsist a large force in this country, if we had the command of the seas, to interrupt the regular transmission of supplies from Europe. This superiority, (with an aid in money,) would enable us to convert the war into a vigorous offensive. I say nothing of the advantages to the trade of both nations, nor how infinitely it would facilitate our supplies. With respect to us, it seems to be one of *two* deciding points; and it appears, too, to be the interest of our allies, abstracted from the immediate benefits to this country, to transfer the naval war to America. The number of ports friendly to them, hostile to the British, the materials for repairing their disabled ships, the extensive supplies towards the subsistence of their fleet, are circumstances which would give them a palpable advantage in the contest of these seas.

10thly. That an additional succor in troops would be extremely desirable. Besides a reinforcement of numbers, the excellence of French troops, that perfect discipline and order in the corps already sent, which have so happily tended to

improve the respect and confidence of the people for our allies, the conciliating disposition and the zeal for the service, which distinguish every rank, sure indications of lasting harmony,—all these considerations evince the immense utility of an accession of force to the corps now here. Correspondent with these motives, the enclosed minutes of a conference between their Excellencies the Count de Rochambeau, the Chevalier de Ternay, and myself will inform you, that an augmentation to fifteen thousand men was judged expedient for the next campaign; and it has been signified to me, that an application has been made to the court of France to this effect. But if the sending so large a succor in troops should necessarily diminish the pecuniary aid, which our allies may be disposed to grant, it were preferable to diminish the aid in men; for the same sum of money, which would transport from France and maintain here a body of troops with all the necessary apparatus, being put into our hands to be employed by us, would serve to give activity to a larger force within ourselves, and its influence would pervade the whole administration.

11thly. That no nation will have it more in its power to repay what it borrows than this. Our debts are hitherto small. The vast and valuable tracts of unlocated lands, the variety and fertility of climates and soils, the advantages of every kind which we possess for commerce, insure to this country a rapid advancement in population and prosperity, and a certainty, its independence being established, of redeeming in a short term of years

the comparatively inconsiderable debts it may have occasion to contract.

That, notwithstanding the difficulties under which we labor, and the inquietudes prevailing among the people, there is still a fund of inclination and resource in the country, equal to great and continued exertions, provided we have it in our power to stop the progress of disgust, by changing the present system, and adopting another more consonant with the spirit of the nation, and more capable of activity and energy in public measures; of which a powerful succor of money must be the basis. The people are discontented; but it is with the feeble and oppressive mode of conducting the war, not with the war itself. They are not unwilling to contribute to its support, but they are unwilling to do it in a way that renders private property precarious; a necessary consequence of the fluctuation of the national currency, and of the inability of government to perform its engagements oftentimes coercively made. A large majority are still firmly attached to the independence of these States, abhor a reunion with Great Britain, and are affectionate to the alliance with France; but this disposition cannot supply the place of means customary and essential in war, nor can we rely on its duration amidst the perplexities, oppressions, and misfortunes, that attend the want of them.[1]

[1] "I am sorry to hear, that the recruiting business in your State is clogged with so many embarrassments. It is perhaps the greatest of the great evils attending this contest, that States as well as individuals had rather wish well, than act well; had rather see a thing done, than do it, or contribute

If the foregoing observations are of any use to you, I shall be happy. I wish you a safe and pleasant voyage, the full accomplishment of your mission, and a speedy return; being, with sentiments of perfect friendship, regard, and affection, dear Sir, &c.

TO LORD CORNWALLIS

HEAD QUARTERS, BEFORE YORK,
18 October, 1781.

MY LORD,

To avoid unnecessary discussion and delays I shall at once, in answer to your Lordships letters of yesterday, declare the general basis upon which a definitive treaty and capitulation must take place. The garrisons of York and Gloucester, including the seamen, as you propose, will be received Pris-

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their just proportion to the doing it. This conduct is not only injurious to the common cause, but in the end most expensive to themselves; besides the distrusts and jealousies, which are sown by such conduct. To expect brick without straw is idle, and yet I am called upon, with as much facility to furnish men and means for every service and every want, as if every iota required of the States had been furnished, and the whole was at my disposal; when the fact is, I am scarcely able to provide a garrison for West Point, or to feed the men that are there. This, and ten thousand reasons, which I could assign, prove the necessity of something more than recommendatory powers in Congress. If that body is not vested with a controuling power in matters of common concern, and for the great purposes of war, I do not scruple to give it decidedly as my opinion, that it will be impossible to prosecute it to any *good effect*. Some States are capitally injured if not ruined, by their own exertions and the neglects of others; while by these irregularities the strength and resources of the country never are, nor can be, employed to advantage."—*Washington to Major-General Armstrong*, 26 March, 1781.

oners of War. The condition annexed, of sending the British and German troops to the parts of Europe to which they respectively belong, is inadmissible. Instead of this they will be marched to such parts of the Country as can most conveniently provide for their subsistence, and the benevolent treatment of Prisoners, which is invariably observed by the Americans, will be extended to them. The same honors will be granted to the surrendering Army as were granted to the Garrison of Charlestown. The shipping and boats in the two harbors, with all their Guns, Stores, Tackling, furniture and apparel, shall be delivered in their present state to an officer of the Navy, appointed to take possession of them.

The Artillery, Arms, Accoutrements, Military Chest, and public stores of every denomination, shall be delivered, unimpaired to the heads of departments to which they respectively belong.

The officers will be indulged in retaining their side arms, and the officers and soldiers may preserve their baggage and effects, with this reserve, that property taken in the Country will be reclaimed.

With regard to the individuals in civil capacities whose interests, your Lordship wishes may be attended to; until they are more particularly described nothing definitive can be settled.

I have to add that I expect the sick and wounded will be supplied with their own Hospital Stores, and be attended by British Surgeons, particularly charged with the care of them.

Your Lordship will be pleased to signify your

determination either to accept or reject the proposals now offered in the course of two hours from the delivery of this letter that Commissioners may be appointed to digest the articles of capitulation, or a renewal of hostilities may take place. I have the honor, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR YORK,
19 October, 1781.

SIR,

I have the honor to inform Congress, that a reduction of the British army, under the command of Lord Cornwallis, is most happily effected. The unremitted ardor, which actuated every officer and soldier in the combined army on this occasion, has principally led to this important event, at an earlier period than my most sanguine hopes had induced me to expect.

The singular spirit of emulation, which animated the whole army from the first commencement of our operations, has filled my mind with the highest pleasure and satisfaction, and had given me the happiest presages of success.

On the 17th instant, a letter was received from Lord Cornwallis, proposing a meeting of commissioners to consult on terms for the surrender of the posts of York and Gloucester. This letter (the first which had passed between us) opened a correspondence, a copy of which I do myself the honor to enclose; that correspondence was followed by

the definitive capitulation, which was agreed to and signed on the 19th, a copy of which is also herewith transmitted, and which, I hope, will meet the approbation of Congress.

I should be wanting in the feelings of gratitude, did I not mention on this occasion, with the warmest sense of acknowledgment, the very cheerful and able assistance, which I have received in the course of our operation from his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau and all his officers of every rank in their respective capacities. Nothing could equal the zeal of our allies, but the emulating spirit of the American officers, whose ardor would not suffer their exertions to be exceeded.

The very uncommon degree of duty and fatigue, which the nature of the service required from the officers of engineers and artillery of both armies, obliges me particularly to mention the obligations I am under to the commanding and other officers of those corps.

I wish it was in my power to express to Congress, how much I feel myself indebted to the Count de Grasse and the officers of the fleet under his command, for the distinguished aid and support which has been afforded by them, between whom and the army the most happy concurrence of sentiments and views has subsisted, and from whom every possible coöperation has been experienced, which the most harmonious intercourse could afford.

Returns of the prisoners, military stores, ordnance, shipping, and other matters, I shall do myself the honor to transmit to Congress, as soon

as they can be collected by the heads of the departments to which they belong.

Colonel Laurens and the Viscount de Noailles, on the part of the combined army, were the gentlemen who acted as commissioners for forming and settling the terms of capitulation and surrender, herewith transmitted, to whom I am particularly obliged for their readiness and attention exhibited on the occasion.

Colonel Tilghman, one of my aids-de-camp, will have the honor to deliver these despatches to your Excellency; he will be able to inform you of every minute circumstance, which is not particularly mentioned in my letter. His merits, which are too well known to need any observations at this time, have gained my particular attention, and I could wish that they may be honored by the notice of your Excellency and Congress.

Your Excellency and Congress will be pleased to accept my congratulations on this happy event, and believe me to be, with the highest esteem, &c. Though I am not possessed of the particular returns yet I have reason to suppose that the number of prisoners will be between five and six thousand exclusive of seamen and others.[1]

[1] "I cannot conclude without mentioning how sensibly I feel the dismemberment of America from this Empire, and that I should be miserable indeed if I did not feel that no blame on that account can be laid at my door, and did I not also know that knavery seems to be so much the striking feature of its inhabitants that it may not in the end be an evil that they will become aliens to this kingdom. G. R."—*George III. to the Earl of Shelburne*, 10 November, 1782.

TO JAMES MCHENRY

VERPLANCK'S POINT, 12 September, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * Our prospects of peace are vanishing.[1] The death of the Marquis of Rockingham has given a shock to the new administration, and disordered its whole system. Fox, Burke, Lord John Cavendish, Lord Keppel, and I believe others, have left it. Earl Shelburne takes the lead, as first lord of the treasury, to which office he was appointed by the King, on the instant the vacancy happened by

[1] The negotiation of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States was a complicated piece of diplomacy. On March 4, 1782, the House of Commons adopted a resolution calling for the cessation of hostilities in America, but without authorizing the Cabinet to negotiate with the revolted colonies on the basis of independence. On March 20, Lord North's ministry resigned, and was succeeded by the Marquis of Rockingham, who took Fox into his Cabinet as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, charged with the negotiation of peace with France, Holland, and Spain, while Earl Shelburne became Secretary for the Colonies and thus had charge of relations with America, which was still regarded as a colonial possession of Great Britain. America was represented in Europe by Franklin, John Adams, Jay, and Laurens, who, however, had been instructed to make no peace with England unless with the concurrence of France. Thus the negotiations between England and France were not in the same hands as those between England and America. When Franklin learned of the impending changes in the British Cabinet, he sent a note to his old friend Shelburne, expressing the hope that peace might soon be restored. Shelburne, with the consent of his colleagues, sent Oswald to Paris to hold informal conferences with Franklin and learn on what terms peace could be made. On June 30, Fox, who felt that Shelburne was encroaching on his prerogatives, left the Cabinet, and the next day the prime minister, Rockingham, died. The King appointed Shelburne to succeed him. On July 11, Parliament was adjourned, and did not meet again until the preliminary articles of the treaty of peace had been signed.

the death of Lord Rockingham. This nobleman, Lord Shelburne, I mean, declares, that the sun of Great Britain will set the moment American independency is acknowledged, and that no man has ever heard him give an assent to the measure. On the other hand, the Duke of Richmond asserts, that the ministry, of which Lord Shelburne is one, came into office pledged to each other and upon the express condition, that America should be declared independent; that he will watch him, and, the moment he finds him departing therefrom, he will quit administration, and give it every opposition in his power.

That the King will push the war, as long as the nation will find men or money, admits not of a doubt in my mind. The whole tenor of his conduct, as well as his last proroguing speech, on the 11th of July, plainly indicate it, and shows in a

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When Jay learned that France was planning to keep the United States out of the Mississippi Valley, and was opposing the American claim to the Newfoundland fisheries, he informed Shelburne that he was ready to begin negotiations without waiting for a formal recognition of independence provided Oswald's commission should be so modified as to make it speak of the thirteen United States of America instead of treating them as thirteen separate colonies. In September, 1782, a commission in this form was given to Oswald, and on November 30, the British and American commissioners agreed upon the preliminary articles of the treaty of peace. They were not to become effective, however, until a general peace between England and the powers with which she was at war had been signed. This was done September 3, 1783. The treaty between England and America had then to go to the American Congress for ratification. With a good deal of difficulty a quorum of that body was obtained, and the final steps in the conclusion of peace were taken January 14, 1784.

clear point of view the impolicy of relaxation on our part. If we are wise, let us prepare for the worst. There is nothing, which will so soon produce a speedy and honorable peace, as a state of preparation for war; and we must either do this, or lay our account for a patched up inglorious peace, after all the toil, blood, and treasure we have spent. This has been my uniform opinion; a doctrine I have endeavored, amidst the torrent of expectation of an approaching peace, to inculcate, and the event, I am sure, will justify me in it. With much truth, I am, &c.

TO TENCH TILGHMAN

NEWBURG, 10 January, 1783.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been favored with your letters of the 22d & 24th of last month from Philadelphia; and thank you for the trouble you have had with my small commissions.—I have sent Mr. Rittenhouse the glass of such spectacles as suit my eyes, that he may know how to grind his Christals.

Neither Duportail nor Gouvion are arrived at this place.—To the latter, I am refered by the Marqs. la Fayette for some matters which he did not chuse to commit to writing.[1]— The sentim'nt however which he has delivered (with respect to the negociations for Peace) accord precisely with the

[1] Lafayette had written, June 25, 1782, to Livingston, giving his sentiments on the negotiations for peace.—*Diplomatic Correspondence.*

ideas I have entertained of this business ever since the secession of Mr. Fox, viz—that no peace would be concluded before the meeting of the British parliament.—And that, if it did not take place within a month afterwards, we might lay our acc't for one more Campaign—*at least.*

The obstinacy of the King, and his unwillingness to acknowledge the Independence of the Country, I have ever considered as the greatest obstacles in the way of a Peace. Lord Shelburne, who is not only at the head of the Administration, but has been introducing others of similiar sentiments to his own, has declared, that nothing but dire necessity should ever force the measure. Of this necessity, men will entertain different opinions. Mr. Fox, it seems, thought the period had arrived some time ago; and yet the Peace is not made—nor will it, I conceive, if the influence of the Crown can draw forth fresh supplies from the Nation, for the purpose of carrying on the War. By the meeting of Parliament, Lord Shelburne would have been able to ascertain two things—first, the best terms on which G. Britain could obtain Peace.—Secondly, the ground on which he himself stood.—If he found it slippery, and that the voice of the people was for pacific measures; he would then, have informed the Parliament that, after many months spent in negociation,—such were the best terms he could obtain;—and that the alternative of accepting them,—or preparing vigorously for the prosecution of the War, was submitted to their consideration (being an extraordinary case)

and decision. A little time therefore, if I have formed a just opinion of the matter, will disclose the result of it. Consequently, we shall either soon have Peace, or not the most agreeable prospect of War, before us—as it appears evident to me, that the States *generally,* are sunk into the most profound lethargy, while some of them are running *quite* retrograde.

The King of G. B. by his letters Patent, (which I have seen) has authorized Mr. Oswald to treat with any Commissioner or Com'rs from the United States of America, who shall appear with proper powers. This, certainly, is a capital point gained. It is at least breaking ground on *their* part, and I dare say proved a bitter pill to Royalty; that, it was indispensably necessary to answer one of the points above mentioned, as the American Commissioners would enter in *no business* with Mr. Oswald till his Powers were made to suit their purposes. Upon the whole, I am fixed in an opinion that Peace, or a pretty long continuance of the War, will have been determined before the adjournment for the Hollidays; and as it will be the middle or last of February before we shall know the result, time will pass heavily on in this dreary mansion—where we are, at present fast locked in frost and snow. * * *[1]

[1] The packet *Washington*, which sailed from L'Orient on January 17, 1783, reached Philadelphia March 12 with the news that the preliminary articles of peace between the United States and Great Britain had been signed on November 30, 1782. When the news was communicated to Washington, he wrote: "The articles of treaty between America and Great Britain are

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON

NEWBURG, 4 March, 1783.

* * * What, my dear Sir, could induce the State of Virginia to rescind their assent to the Impost Law?[1] How are the numerous creditors in Civil as well as Military life to be paid unless there are regular & certain funds established to discharge the Interest of Monies which must be borrowed for

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as full and satisfactory as we have reason to expect; but from the connexion in which they stand with a general pacification, they are very inconclusive and contingent. From this circumstance, compared with such other intelligence as I have been able to collect, I must confess, I have my fears that we shall be obliged to worry through another campaign before we arrive at that happy period, which is to crown all our toils."—*Washington to the President of Congress*, 19 March, 1783. When the preliminary treaty arrived, most persons were ready to assume at once that peace was assured. But Washington was more cautious. Anxious as he was to retire to private life, he determined to remain in the service "until the arrival of the definitive treaty," or "the evacuation of my country by our newly acquired friends."—*Washington to the Chevalier de Chastellux*, 12 October, 1783. Sir Guy Carleton had already on August 17 notified the President of Congress that he had received private orders for the evacuation of New York. This event took place on November 25. Washington then wrote joyfully: "After seeing the backs of the British Forces turned upon us, and the Executive of the State of New York put into peaceable possession of their Capitol, I set out for this place [Philadelphia]. On Monday next I expect to leave the city, and by slow traveling arrive at Baltimore on Wednesday, where I will spend one day and then proceed to Annapolis and get translated into a private Citizen."—*Washington to McHenry*, December 10, 1783.

[1] On February 3, 1781, Congress passed a resolution calling upon the States to grant it as an "indispensable necessity" the power to levy an import duty of five per cent. *ad valorem*. All the States except Rhode Island finally gave their consent subject to various conditions, and Congress was about to send an

these purposes? and what Tax can be more just, or better calculated to the end than an Impost?—

The Alarm Bell which has been rung with such tremendous sound of the danger of entrusting Congress with the money is too selfish & futile to require a serious answer—Who are Congress, but the People?—do they not return to them at certain short periods?—Are they not amenable at all times to them for their Conduct—& subject to recall?—What interest therefore can a man have under these circumstances distinct from his Constituents?—Can it be supposed, that with *design,* he would form a junto—or dangerous Aristocracy that would operate against himself in less than a Month perhaps after it should be established?—I can have no conception of it.

But from the observations I have made in the course of this war—and my intercourse with the States both in their united and seperate capacities have afforded ample opportunities of judging—I am decidedly of opinion that if the Powers of Congress are not enlarged, and made competent to all *general purposes* that the blood that has been spilt

urgent plea to that delinquent when Virginia, on December 7, 1782, rescinded her action. Her reasons, as set forth in the preamble of the act, were as follows:

"The permitting any power, other than the general assembly of this commonwealth, to levy duties or taxes upon the citizens of this State within the same, is injurious to its sovereignty, may prove destructive of the rights and liberty of the people, and so far as Congress might exercise the same is contravening the spirit of the confederation."—Hening, *Statutes-at-Large of Virginia,* xi., 171. In October, 1783, however, after the receipt of Washington's *Circular Letter to the Governors,* Virginia assented to the impost by a unanimous vote.—*Ibid.,* xi., 350.

—the Expences which have been incurred—and the distresses which we have undergone will avail us nothing—and that the band which at present holds us together, by a very feeble thread, will soon be broken when anarchy & confusion must ensue.

You will excuse the freedom of these sentiments —they proceed from an honest heart Altho' they should be found to be the result of erroneous thinking—they will at least prove the sincerity of my friendship, as they are totally undisguised.

With great esteem &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

HEAD-QUARTERS, 12 March, 1783.

SIR,

It is with inexpressible concern I make the following report to your Excellency. Two days ago, anonymous papers were circulated in the army, requesting a general meeting of the officers on the next day. A copy of one of these papers is enclosed, No. 1. About the same time, another anonymous paper, purporting to be an address to the officers of the army, was handed about in a clandestine manner. A copy of this is marked No. 2. To prevent any precipitate and dangerous resolutions from being taken at this perilous moment, while the passions were all inflamed, as soon as these things had come to my knowledge the next morning, I issued the enclosed order, No. 3.[1] In this situation the matter now rests.

[1] This was an order summoning a meeting of the officers, to

As all opinion must be suspended until after the meeting on Saturday, I have nothing further to add, except a wish that the measure I have taken to dissipate a storm, which had gathered so suddenly and unexpectedly, may be acceptable to Congress; and to assure them that, in every vicissitude of circumstances, still actuated with the greatest zeal in their service, I shall continue my utmost exertions to promote the welfare of my country, under the most lively expectation, that Congress have the best intention of doing ample justice to the army as soon as circumstances will possibly admit.

I have the honor to be, &c.

P. S. Since writing the foregoing, another anonymous paper is put in circulation, a copy of which is enclosed, No. 4.[1]

ADDRESS TO THE OFFICERS[2]

GENTLEMEN,

By an anonymous summons an attempt has been

be held a few days later than the time fixed in the anonymous address.

[1] Read in Congress, March 17th. Referred to Gilman, Dyer, Clark, Rutledge, and Mercer. The committee was composed to "saddle with this embarrassment the men who had opposed the measures necessary for satisfying the army, viz: the half-pay and permanent funds; against one or other of which the individuals in question had voted." Madison further recorded that "the steps taken by the General to avert the gathering storm, and his professions of inflexible adherence to his duty to Congress and to his country, excited the most affectionate sentiments towards him . . . [The situation] gave peculiar awe and solemnity to the present moment, and oppressed the minds of Congress with an anxiety and distress which had been scarcely felt in any period of the Revolution."—*Ford.*

[2] "When the General took his station in the desk or pulpit,

made to convene you together. How inconsistent with the rules of propriety, how unmilitary, and how subversive of all good order and discipline, let the good sense of the army decide.

In the moment of this summons, another anonymous production was sent into circulation; addressed more to the feelings and passions, than to the reason and judgment of the army. The author of the piece is entitled to much credit for the goodness of his pen, and I could wish he had as much credit for the rectitude of his heart; for, as men see through different optics, and are induced by the reflecting faculties of the mind to use different means to obtain the same end, the author of the address should have had more charity, than to mark for suspicion the man, who should recommend moderation and longer forbearance, or in other words, who should not think as he thinks, and act as he advises. But he had another plan in view, in which candor and liberality of sentiment, regard to justice, and love of country, have no part; and he was right to insinuate the darkest suspicion, to effect the blackest designs.[1]

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which you may recollect, was in the Temple, he took out his written address from his coat pocket, and his spectacles, with his other hand, from his waistcoat pocket, and then addressed the officers in the following manner: 'Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray, but almost blind, in the service of my country.' This little address, with the mode and manner of delivering it, drew tears from [many] of the officers."—*Colonel Cobb's letter.*

[1] The authorship of the anonymous addresses was afterward avowed by Major John Armstrong, an aide-de-camp of General Gates. He was at that time a young man, and later served the government in various responsible positions. He prepared the

That the address is drawn with great art, and is designed to answer the most insidious purposes, that it is calculated to impress the mind with an idea of premeditated injustice in the sovereign power of the United States, and rouse all those resentments, which must unavoidably flow from such a belief; that the secret mover of this scheme, whoever he may be, intended to take advantage of the passions, while they were warmed by the recollection of past distresses, without giving time for cool, deliberate thinking, and that composure of mind which is so necessary to give dignity and stability to measures, is rendered too obvious by the mode of conducting the business, to need other proof than a reference to the proceeding.

Thus much, Gentlemen, I have thought it incumbent on me to observe to you, to show upon what principles I opposed the irregular and hasty meeting, which was proposed to be held on Tuesday last, and not because I wanted a disposition to give you every opportunity, consistent with your own honor and the dignity of the army, to make known your grievances. If my conduct heretofore has not evinced to you, that I have been a faithful friend to the army, my declaration of it at this time would be equally unavailing and improper. But, as I

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addresses at the request of a number of his fellow-officers who felt aggrieved that their just claims were so long neglected by Congress. Washington wrote in 1797: "I have since had sufficient reason for believing that the object of the author was just, honorable, and friendly to the country, though the means suggested by him were certainly liable to much misunderstanding and abuse."

was among the first, who embarked in the cause of our common country; as I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you on public duty; as I have been the constant companion and witness of your distresses, and not among the last to feel and acknowledge your merits; as I have ever considered my own military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the army; as my heart has ever expanded with joy, when I have heard its praises, and my indignation has arisen, when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it; it can scarcely be supposed, at this late stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests. But how are they to be promoted? The way is plain, says the anonymous addresser; if war continues, remove into the unsettled country; there establish yourselves, and leave an ungrateful country to defend itself. But whom are they to defend? Our wives, our children, our farms and other property, which we leave behind us? Or, in the state of hostile separation, are we to take the two first (the latter cannot be removed) to perish in a wilderness with hunger, cold, and nakedness? If peace takes place, neither sheath your swords, says he, until you have obtained full and ample justice. This dreadful alternative, of either deserting our country in the extremest hour of distress, or turning our arms against it, which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into instant compliance, has something so shocking in it, that humanity revolts at the idea. My God! What can this writer have in view by recommend-

ing such measures. Can he be a friend to the army? Can he be a friend to this country? Rather is he not an insidious foe? Some emissary, perhaps from New York, plotting the ruin of both by sowing the seeds of discord and separation between the civil and military powers of the continent? And what a compliment does he pay to our understandings, when he recommends measures, in either alternative, impracticable in their nature?

But here, Gentlemen, I will drop the curtain, because it would be as imprudent in me to assign my reasons for this opinion, as it would be insulting to your conception to suppose you stood in need of them. A moment's reflection will convince every dispassionate mind of the physical impossibility of carrying either proposal into execution.

There might, Gentlemen, be an impropriety in my taking notice, in this address to you, of an anonymous production; but the manner in which that performance has been introduced to the army, the effect it was intended to have, together with some other circumstances, will amply justify my observations on the tendency of that writing. With respect to the advice given by the author to suspect the man, who shall recommend moderate measures and longer forbearance, I spurn it, as every man who regards that liberty, and reveres that justice, for which we contend, undoubtedly must. For, if men are to be precluded from offering their sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of mankind,

reason is of no use to us; the freedom of speech may be taken away, and, dumb and silent, we may be led away like sheep to the slaughter.

I cannot, in justice to my own belief, and what I have great reason to conceive is the intention of Congress, conclude this address without giving it as my decided opinion, that that honorable body entertain exalted sentiments of the services of the army, and, from a full conviction of its merits and sufferings, will do it complete justice. That their endeavors to discover, and establish funds for this purpose have been unwearied, and will not cease, till they have succeeded, I have no doubt; but, like all other large bodies, where there is a variety of different interests to reconcile, their deliberations are slow. Why then should we distrust them; and, in consequence of that distrust, adopt measures, which may cast a shade over that glory, which has been so justly acquired, and tarnish the reputation of an army, which is celebrated through all Europe for its fortitude and patriotism? And for what is this done? To bring the object we seek nearer? No! Most certainly, in my opinion, it will cast it at a greater distance.

For myself (and I take no merit in giving the assurance, being induced to it from principles of gratitude, veracity, and justice), a grateful sense of the confidence you have ever placed in me, a recollection of the cheerful assistance and prompt obedience I have experienced from you, under every vicissitude of fortune, and the sincere affection I feel for an army I have so long had the honor to

command, oblige me to declare in this public and solemn manner, that, in the attainment of complete justice for all your toils and dangers, and in the gratification of every wish, so far as may be done consistently with the great duty I owe to my country, and those powers we are bound to respect, you may freely command my services to the utmost extent of my abilities.[1]

While I give you these assurances and pledge myself in the most unequivocal manner to exert whatever ability I am possessed of in your favor, let me entreat you, Gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which, in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained. Let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress, that, previous to your dissolution as an army, they will cause all your accounts to be fairly liquidated, as directed in their resolutions, which were published to you two days ago, and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power to render ample justice to you for your faithful and meritorious services. And let me conjure you in the name of our common

[1] In making this promise, Washington was not undertaking to pursue any new line of conduct. He had always been an ardent defender of the claims of the army to generous treatment at the hands of Congress. For several months he had been advocating the cause of the soldiers in his letters to Congress, and after the Newburg addresses more than a score of letters to the President of Congress, to individual members and other government officials, urge the immediate recognition of their rights.

country, as you value your own sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man, who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood.

By thus determining and thus acting, you will pursue the plain and direct road to the attainment of your wishes; you will defeat the insidious designs of our enemies, who are compelled to resort from open force to secret artifice; you will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; and you will, by the dignity of your conduct, afford occasion for posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, "Had this day been wanting, the world had never seen the last stage of perfection, to which human nature is capable of attaining."

TO JOSEPH JONES, IN CONGRESS

NEWBURG, 12 March, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter of the 27th ulto, and thank you for your information and the freedom of your communications. My official Letter to Congress of this date will inform you of what has happened in this Quarter; in addition to which, it

may be necessary it should be known to you, and to such others you may think proper, that the temper of the army, though very irritable on acct. of their long protracted sufferings, have been apparently extremely quiet while their business was depending before Congress, until four days past. In the mean time, it should seem, reports have been propagated in Philadelphia, that dangerous combinations were forming in the army; and this at a time, when there was not a syllable of the kind in agitation in camp.

It also appears, that, upon the arrival of a certain Gentleman from Phila. in camp, whose name at present I do not incline to mention, such sentiments as these were immediately and industriously circulated; that it was universally expected the army would not disband until they had obtained justice; that the public creditors looked up to them for redress of their Grievances, would afford them every aid, and even join them in the Field if necessary; that some members of Congress wished the measure might take effect, in order to compel the Public, particularly the delinquent States, to do justice; with many other suggestions of a similar nature. From whence, and a variety of other considerations, it is generally believed, that the scheme was not only planned but also digested and matured in Philadelphia, and that some people have been playing a double game, spreading at the camp and in Philadelphia Reports, and raising jealousies, equally void of foundation, until called into being by their vile artifices; for, as soon as the minds of the officers were thought to be prepared for the

transaction, anonymous invitations were circulated, requesting a general meeting of the officers next day. At the same instant many copies of the address to the officers of the army was scattered in every State line of it.

So soon as I obtained knowledge of these things, I issued the order of the 11th, transmitted to Congress, in order to rescue the foot, that stood wavering on the precipice of despair, from taking those steps, which would have led to the abyss of misery, while the passions were inflamed and the mind tremblingly alive with the recollection of past sufferings, and their present feelings. I did this upon the principle, that it is easier to divert from a wrong to a right path, than it is to recall the hasty and fatal steps, that have been already taken.

It is commonly supposed, that, if the officers had met agreeably to the anonymous summons, resolutions might have been formed, the consequences of which may be more easily conceived than expressed. Now they will have leisure to view the matter more calmly and seriously. It is to be hoped that they will be induced to adopt more rational measures, and wait a while longer for the settlemt. of their accts; the postponing of which gives more uneasiness in the army than any other thing. There is not a man in it, who will not acknowledge that Congress have not the means of payment; but why not, say they one and all, liquidate the accts. and certifie our dues? Are we to be disbanded and sent home without this? Are we afterwards to make individual applications for such settlements at Philadel-

phia, or any auditing office in our respective States; to be shifted perhaps from one board to another, dancing attendance at all, and finally perhaps, be postponed till we lose the substance in pursuit of ye shadow? While they are agitated by these considerations, there are not wanting insidious characters, who tell them it is neither the wish nor the intention of the public to settle their accounts; but to delay this business under one pretext or another, until Peace, wch: we are upon the verge of, and a separation of the army takes place; when, it is well known it will be difficult if not impracticable; a general settlement never can be effected, and that individual loss in this instance becomes public gain.

However derogatory these ideas are with the dignity, honor, and justice of government, yet a matter so interesting to the army, and at the same time so easy to be effected by the Public, as that of liquidating the accounts, is delayed without any apparent or obvious necessity, they will have their place in a mind that is soured and irritated. Let me entreat you, therefore, my good Sir, to push this matter to an issue; and, if there are Delegates among you, who are really opposed to doing justice to the army, scruple not to tell them, if matters should come to extremity, that they must be answerable for all the ineffable horrors, which may be occasioned thereby. I am most sincerely and affectionately yours.

TO LUND WASHINGTON

NEWBURG, 19 March, 1783.

DEAR LUND,

I did not write to you by the last post. I was too much engaged at the time, in counteracting a most insidious attempt to disturb the repose of the army, and sow the seeds of discord between the civil and military powers of the continent, to attend to small matters. The author of this attempt, whoever he may be, is yet behind the curtain; and as conjectures might be wrong, I shall be silent at present. The good sense, the virtue and patient forbearance of the army on this, as upon every other trying occasion which has happened to call them into action, has again triumphed; and appeared with more lustre than ever. But if the States will not furnish the supplies required by Congress, thereby enabling the Superintendent of Finance to feed, clothe, and pay the army, if they suppose the war can be carried on without money, or that money can be borrowed without permanent funds to pay the interest of it; if they have no regard to justice, because it is attended with expence; if gratitude to men, who have rescued them from the jaws of danger and brought them to the haven of Independence and Peace, is to subside, as danger is removed; if the sufferings of the army, who have borne and forborne more than any other class of men in the United States, expending their health, and many of them their all, in an unremitted service of near eight years in the field; encountering hunger, cold and nakedness, are to be forgotten; if

it is presumed there is no bounds to the patience of the army; or that when peace takes place, their claims for pay due, and rewards promised may die with the military non-existence of its members—if such, I say, should be the sentiments of the States, and that their conduct, or the conduct of some, does but too well warrant the conclusion, well may another anonymous addresser step forward, and with more effect than the last did, say with him, "You have arms in your hands; do justice to yourselves, and never sheath the sword, till you have obtained it." How far men who labor under the pressure of accumulated distress, and are irritated by a belief that they are treated with neglect, ingratitude and injustice in the extreme might be worked upon by designing men, is worthy of very serious consideration. But justice, policy, yea common sense must tell every man that the creditors of the continent cannot receive payments unless funds are provided for it, and that our national character, if these are much longer neglected, must be stamped with indelible infamy in every nation of the world where the fact is known.[1]

[1] "Such an avidity appears among our People to make money, and so feeble the Reins of Government (where there is an attempt to use them) to restrain the illicit and pernicious intercourse of Trade with the enemy at New York, that the fence between them and us is entirely broken down, and nothing but an Army quite sufficient to form a close investiture of that place can repair it. Five such armies as I have would be incompetent, employed in any other way. The boats which have been Commissioned to obstruct this trade, are instrumental in carrying it on, and have been caught in the act as many other Trading parties also have been by the Guards and patroles I keep for this purpose. But it avails nothing. By Hook or by

TO GOVERNOR BENJAMIN HARRISON

NEWBURG, 19 March, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

About the first of this month I wrote you a long letter.[1] I touched upon the state of the army, the situation of public creditors, and wished to know from you as a friend, what causes had induced the Assembly of Virginia to withdraw their assent to the Impost Law, and how the Continental creditors (without adequate funds) were to come at or obtain security for their money. I little expected at the time of writing that letter, that we were on the eve of an important crisis to this army, when the touchstone of discord was to be applied, and the virtue of its members to undergo the severest trial.

You have not been altogether unacquainted, I dare say, with the fears, the hopes, the apprehensions, and the expectations of the army, relatively to the provision, which is to be made for them hereafter. Altho' a firm reliance on the integrity of Congress, and a belief that the Public would finally do justice to all its Servants and give an indisputable security for the payment of the half-pay of the officers, had kept them amidst a variety of sufferings tolerably quiet and contented for two or three years past; yet the total want of pay, the little prospect of receiving any from the unpromising state of the public finances, and the absolute

Crook they are certain of acquittal. In truth I am quite discouraged, and have scarce any thing left but lamentation for the want [of] virtue and depravity of my Countrymen."—*Washington to Robert R. Livingston*, 19 March, 1783.

[1] For part of this letter see page 181.

aversion of the States to establish any Continental funds for the payment of the Debt due to the army, did at the close of the last Campaign excite greater discontents, and threaten more serious and alarming consequences, than it is easy for me to describe or you to conceive. Happily for us, the officers of highest rank and greatest consideration interposed; and it was determined to address Congress in an humble, pathetic, and explicit manner.

While the Sovereign Power appeared perfectly well disposed to do justice, it was discovered that the States would enable them to do nothing; and in this state of affairs, and after some time spent on the business in Philadelphia, a Report was made by the Delegates of the army, giving a detail of the proceedings. Before this could be communicated to the Troops, while the minds of all were in a peculiar state of inquietude and irritation, an anonymous writer, who tho' he did not boldly step forth and give his name to the world, sent into circulation an address to the officers of the army, which, in point of composition, in elegance and force of expression, has rarely been equalled in the English Language, and in which the dreadful alternative was proposed, of relinquishing the Service in a body, in case the war continued, or retaining their arms in case of peace, until Congress should comply with all their demands. At the same time, seizing the moment when the minds were inflamed by the most pathetic representations, a General meeting of the officers was summoned by another anonymous production.

It is impossible to say what would have been the consequence, had the author succeeded in his first plans. But, measures having been taken to postpone the meeting, so as to give time for cool reflection and counteraction, the good sense of the officers has terminated this affair in a manner, which reflects the greatest glory on themselves, and demands the highest expressions of gratitude from their Country.

The Proceedings have been reported to Congress, and will probably be published for the satisfaction of the good people of these United States. In the mean time I thought it necessary to give you these particulars, principally with a design to communicate to you without reserve my opinion on this interesting subject. For, notwithstanding the storm has now passed over, notwithstanding the officers have in despite of their accumulated sufferings given the most unequivocal and exalted proofs of Patriotism, yet I believe, unless justice shall be done, and funds effectually provided for the payment of the Debt, the most deplorable and ruinous consequences may be apprehended. Justice, honor, gratitude, policy, every thing is opposed to the conduct of driving men to despair of obtaining their just rights, after serving Seven years a painful life in the Field. I say in the *Field,* because they have not during that period had any thing to shelter them from the inclemency of the seasons but Tents and such Houses as they could build for themselves.

Convinced of this, and actuated as I am, not by

private and Interested motives, but by a sense of duty, a love of justice, and all the feelings of gratitude towards a body of men, who have merited infinitely well of their Country, I can never conceal or suppress my Sentiments. I cannot cease to exert all the abilities I am possessed of, to show the evil tendency of procrastinated justice, for I will not suppose it is intended ultimately to withhold it, nor fail to urge the Establishment of such adequate and permanent funds, as will enable Congress to secure the payment of the public Debt, on such principles as will preserve the national faith, give satisfaction to the army and tranquillity to the Public. With great esteem and regard, I am, &c.

P. S. The author of the Anonymous Address is yet behind the curtain; and, as conjecture may be grounded on error, I will not announce mine *at present.*

TO THEODORICK BLAND

NEWBURG, 4 April, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

On Sunday last the Baron de Steuben handed me your obliging favor of the 22d of March. Permit me to offer you my unfeigned thanks for the clear and candid opinions which you have given me of European politics. Your reasonings upon the conduct of the different Powers at War would have appeared conclusive, had not the happy event which has been since announced to us, and on which I

most sincerely congratulate you, proved how well they were founded. Peace has given rest to speculative opinions respecting the time and terms of it. The first has come as soon as we could well have expected it under the disadvantages which we labored; and the latter is abundantly satisfactory.

It is now the bounden duty of every one to make the blessings thereof as diffusive as possible. Nothing would so effectually bring this to pass as the removal of those local prejudices which intrude upon and embarass that great line of policy which alone can make us a free, happy and powerful People. Unless our Union can be fixed upon such a basis as to accomplish these, certain I am we have toiled, bled and spent our treasure to very little purpose.

We have now a National character to establish, and it is of the utmost importance to stamp favorable impressions upon it; let justice be then one of its characteristics, and gratitude another. Public creditors of every denomination will be comprehended in the first; the Army in a particular manner will have a claim to the latter; to say that no distinction can be made between the claims of public creditors is to declare that there is no difference in circumstances; or that the services of all men are equally alike. This Army is of near eight years' standing, six of which they have spent in the Field without any other shelter from the inclemency of the seasons than Tents, or such Houses as they could build for themselves without expence to the public. They have encountered hunger,

cold and nakedness. They have fought many Battles and bled freely. They have lived without pay, and in consequence of it, officers as well as men have subsisted upon their Rations.

They have often, very often, been reduced to the necessity of Eating Salt Porke, or Beef not for a day, or a week only but months together without Vegetables or money to buy them; or a cloth to wipe on.

Many of them to do better, and to dress as Officers have contracted heavy debts or spent their patrimonies. The first see the Doors of Gaols open to receive them—whilst those of the latter are shut against them. Is there no discrimination then —no extra exertion to be made in favor of men in these peculiar circumstances, in the event of their military dissolution? Or, if no worse cometh of it, are they to be turned adrift soured and discontented, complaining of the ingratitude of their Country, and under the influence of these passions, to become fit subjects for unfavorable impressions, and unhappy dissentions? For permit me to add, tho every man in the Army feels his distress—it is not every one that will reason to the cause of it.

I would not from the observations here made, be understood to mean that Congress should (because I know they cannot, nor does the army expect it) pay the full arrearages due to them till Continental or State funds are established for the purpose. They would, from what I can learn, go home contented—nay—*thankful* to receive what I have men-

tioned in a more public letter of this date, and in the manner there expressed. And surely this may be effected with proper exertions. Or what possibility was there of keeping the army together, if the war had continued, when the victualling, clothing, and other expenses of it were to have been added? Another thing Sir, (as I mean to be frank and free in my communications on this subject) I will not conceal from you—it is the dissimilarity in the payments to men in Civil and Military life. The first receive everything—the other get nothing but bare subsistence—they ask what this is owing to? and reasons have been assigned, which, say they, amount to this—that men in Civil life have stronger passions and better pretensions to indulge them, or less virtue and regard for their Country than us,—otherwise, as we are all contending for the same prize and equally interested in the attainment of it, why do we not bear the burthen equally?

These and other comparisons which are unnecessary to enumerate give a keener edge to their feelings and contribute not a little to sour their tempers. As it is the first wish of my Soul to see the War happily & speedily terminated; and those who are now in arms, returned to Citizenship with good dispositions, I think it a duty which I owe to candor and to friendship, to point you to such things as my opportunities have given me reason to believe will have a tendency to harmony and bring them to pass. I shall only add that with much esteem and regard, I am, &c.

TO THEODORICK BLAND

HEAD-QUARTERS, 4 April, 1783.

SIR,

The subject of your private letter is so important and involving so many considerations, that I could not hazard my own opinion *only* for a Reply. I have therefore communicated its contents to some of the most intelligent, well-informed, and confidential officers, whose judgment I have compelled, and endeavored to collect from them, what is the general Line and Expectation of the Army at large respectg. the points you mention—and as this is meant to be equally private and confidential as yours, I shall communicate my sentiments to you without reserve, and with the most entire Freedom.

The idea of the officers in keeping the Army together until Settlement of their accounts is effected, and *Funds established* for their Security, is perhaps not so extensive as the words of their Resolution seem to intimate. When that Idea was first expressed, our prospects of Peace were Distant, and it was supposed that Settlement and Funds might both be effected before a Dissolution of the Army would probably take place. They wished therefore to have both done at once. But since the Expectation of Peace is bro't so near, however desirable it would be to the officers, to have their Ballances secured to them upon sufficient Funds, as well as their Settlement ascertained, yet it is not in Idea, that the Army should be held together for the sole Purpose of enforcing either. Nor do they

suppose that, by such Means, they could operate on the *Fears* of the civil power, or of the people at large—the impracticability as well as ill policy of such a mode of Conduct is easily discoverable by every sensible Intelligent officer.—The Tho't is reprobated as ridiculous and inadmissible.

Tho' these are their Ideas on the particular Point you have mentioned, yet they have their Expectations and they are of a very serious Nature and will require all the Attention and consideration of Congress to gratify them. These I will endeavor to explain with freedom and candor.

In the first place, I fix it as an *indispensible* Measure, that previous to the Disbanding of the Army, all their accounts, should be compleatly liquidated and settled—and that every person shall be ascertained of the Ballance due to him; and it is *equally essential,* in my opinion, that this Settlement should be effected, with the Army in its collected Body, without any dispersion of the different Lines to their respective States—for in this way the Accounts will be drawn into one view, properly digested upon one general system, and compared with a variety of circumstances, which will require References upon a much easier plan to be dispersed over all the States. The Settlements will be effected with greater ease, in less Time, and with much more œconomy in this, than in a scattered situation. At the same Time jealousies will be removed, the minds of the Army will be impressed with greater Ease and Quiet, and they better prepared, with good opinions and proper

Dispositions to fall back into the great Mass of Citizens—

But after Settlement is formed, there remains another Circumstance of more importance still, and without which, it will be of little consequence to have the sums due them ascertained; that is, the Payment of some part of the Ballance. The Distresses of Officers and Soldiers, are now driven to the extreme, and without this provision will not be lessened by the prospect of Dissolution. It is therefore universally expected that three months' pay at least, must be given them before they are disbanded—this Sum it is confidently imagined may be procured and is absolutely indispensable.

They are the rather confirmed in a Belief of the practicability of obtaining it—as the pay of the Army, has formed great part of the Sum in the Estimates which have been made for the Expences of the War—and altho' this has been obliged to give way to more necessary Claims, yet when those Demands cease, as many will upon the Disbanding the Army—the Pay will then come into view, and have its equal claim to Notice.

They will not however be unreasonable in this Expectation. If the whole cannot be obtained before they are dispersed, the Receipt of one month in Hand, with an absolute assurance of having the other two months in a short Time, will be satisfactory—Should Mr. Morris not be able to assure them the two last Months from the Treasury, it is suggested that it may be obtained in the States, by Drafts from him upon their several Continental

Receivers, to be collected by the Individual Officers and Soldiers, out of the last year's Arrears due from the several States apportionments, and for which Taxes have long since been assessed by the Legislatures—This mode, tho' troublesome to the officer, and perhaps inconvenient for the financier, yet from the Necessity of circumstances may be adopted, and might be a means of collecting more Taxes from the people than would in any other way be done. This is only hinted as an Expedient. The Financier will take his own measures. But I repeat it, as an indispensable point, that this Sum at least, must by some means be procured.—Without this provision, it will be absolutely impossible for many to get from Camp, or to return to their friends—and driven to such necessities it is impossible to foresee what may be the consequences of their not obtaining it. But the worst is to be apprehended.—A Credit, built by their Friends & such others as have been good eno' to supply their wants upon the Expectation of being refunded at the close of the War, out of the large Sums which by their Toils in the course of many Years hard Service, have become due to them from the public, has supported the greatest Number of them to the present Time—and that Debt now remains upon them. But to be disbanded at last, without this little pittance (which is necessary to quit Quarters) like a Sett of Beggars, Needy, distressed and without Prospect will not only blast the Expectations of their Creditors, and expose the officers to the utmost Indignity and the worst of consequences;—

but will drive every man of Honor and Sensibility to the extremest Horrors of Despair. On the other Hand to give them this Sum, however small in comparison of their Dues, yet, by fulfiling their Expectations, will sweeten their Tempers, cheer their hopes of the future—enable them to submit themselves 'till they can cast about for some future means of Business—it will gratify their pressing Creditors, and will throw the officer back with Ease and Confidence into the Bosom of this Country, and enable him to mix with cordiality and affection among the mass of useful, happy and contented Citizens—an object of the most desirable importance. I cannot at this point of Distance, know the arrangements of the financier, what have been his anticipations, or what his prospects—but the necessity of fulfilling this Expectation of the Army affects me so exceeding forcibly, that I can not help dwelling upon it, nor is there in my present apprehensions a point of greater consequence or that requires more serious attention. Under this Impression I have thought, if a spirited, pointed, and well adapted Address was framed by Congress, and sent to the States on this Occasion, that Gratitude, Justice, Honor, National Pride, and every Consideration, would operate upon them to strain every Nerve, and exert every endeavor to throw into the Public Treasury, a Sum equal to this Requisition—It cannot be denied, especially when they reflect, how small the Expectation is, compared with the large sum of arrears which is due—and

tho' I know that Distinctions are commonly odious, and are looked upon with a jealous and envious Eye—yet it is impossible, that in this case, it can have this operation; for whatever the feelings of Individuals at large may be in contemplating on their own Demands—yet upon a candid Comparison, every man, even the most interested, will be forced to yield to the superior merit and sufferings of the Soldier, who for a course of Years, has contributed his Services in the field, not only at the Expence of his fortune and former Employment, but at the Risque of Ease, domestic happiness, comfort and even Life. After all these Considerations, how must he be struck with the mediocrity of his demand, when, instead of the Pay due him for four, five, perhaps six years hard earned Toil and Distress, he is content for the present with receiving three months, only—and is willing to risque the Remainder upon the same Basis of Security, with the general mass of other public Creditors.—

Another Expectation seems to have possessed the minds of the officers. That, as the objects above mentioned are not the only ones which must occupy the attention of Congress, in Connexion with the Army, it may probably be tho't advisable that Congress should send to the Army, a respectable, well-chosen, and well instructed Committee, of their own Body; with liberal Power, to confer with the Army, to know their Sentiments, their Expectations, their Distresses, their Necessities, and the Impossibility of their falling back from the Soldier

to Citizenship without some gratification to their most reasonable Demands. This would be considered as a compliment. And to add still greater satisfaction and advantage, it is tho't very advisable, that the Secretary at War, and the Financier should be of this Delegation. Previous to a Dissolution of the Army, many arrangements will doubtless be necessary in both those Departments, to procure a happy and honorable close to the War, and to introduce Peace, with a prospect of National Glory, Stability, and Benefit. It is not for me to dictate, but I should suppose some Peace Establishment will be necessary; some posts will be kept up and garrisoned; Arsenals for the Deposit of Ordnance and Military Stores, will be determined on, and the Stores collected and deposited; arrangements will be necessary for the Discharge of the Army; at what periods and under what circumstances. The Terms of the Soldiers Service are on different Grounds;—those for the War will suppose and they have a right to do so, their periods of Service to expire at the Close of War, and Proclamation of Peace. What period shall be fixed for these? The Levy men may be retained while the British force remain in our Country if it shall be judged advisable. If I am not consulted in these matters, it will be necessary for me to have an early Knowledge of the Intentions of Congress on these and many other points. But I can think of no mode so effectual as the one suggested of a Committee accompanied by the Finan-

cier and Secretary at War. Plans which to us appear feasible and practicable, may be attended with insurmountable difficulties. On the other hand measures may be adopted at Philadelphia which cannot be carried into execution. But here in the manner proposed something might be hit upon which would accommodate itself to the Ideas of both, with greater Ease and Satisfaction, than may now be expected, and which could not be effected by writing Quires of paper, and spending a Length of Time.—

Upon the whole, you will be able to collect from the foregoing Sentiments what are the Expectations of the Army—that they will involve compleat Settlement and partial payment *previous* to any Dispersion. (This they suppose may be done within the Time that they must necessarily remain together.) Upon the fulfillment of these two, they will readily retire, in full assurance that ample Security at the earliest period, and on the best ground it can be had will be obtained for the Remainder of their Ballances.

If the Idea of a Committee to right the Army should not be adopted,—and you find it necessary to pass any further Resolutions, you will easily collect from the foregoing Sentiments what will be satisfactory—without my troubling you any further —I pray you to communicate the Contents of this Letter to Colo. Hamilton, from whom I received a request similar to yours. I have &c.

CIRCULAR LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE GOVERNORS OF ALL THE STATES ON DISBANDING THE ARMY [1]

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURG, 8 June, 1783.

SIR,

The great object, for which I had the honor to hold an appointment in the service of my country, being accomplished, I am now preparing to resign it into the hands of Congress, and to return to that domestic retirement, which, it is well known, I left with the greatest reluctance; a retirement for which I have never ceased to sigh, through a long and painful absence, and in which (remote from the noise and trouble of the world) I meditate to pass the remainder of my life, in a state of undisturbed repose. But before I carry this resolution into effect, I think it a duty incumbent on me to make this my last official communication; to congratulate you on the glorious events which Heaven has

[1] Throughout the war Washington had been impressed with the inadequacy of the powers of Congress. As he himself said, no one had suffered from the weakness of the government more than he. This weakness, however, was merely a reflection of the lack of a sense of unity among the people of the several States. While the war lasted, they were forced to hold together. But when that necessity was removed, Washington greatly feared that the States would fall apart. "The Constitution of Congress," he wrote, "must be competent to the *general purposes* of Government, and of such a nature as to bind us together. Otherwise we shall be like a rope of Sand, and as easily broken; and may in a short time, become the sport of European Politics, even if we should be disposed to Peace among ourselves."—*Washington to Tench Tilghman*, 24 April, 1783. This was the feeling which prompted the *Circular Letter to the Governors*,—his final effort before retiring to private life to convince the States of the necessity of placing the Union upon a stable basis, which could only be accomplished, in his opinion, by enlarging the powers of Congress.

been pleased to produce in our favor; to offer my sentiments respecting some important subjects, which appear to me to be intimately connected with the tranquillity of the United States; to take my leave of your Excellency as a public character; and to give my final blessing to that country, in whose service I have spent the prime of my life, for whose sake I have consumed so many anxious days and watchful nights, and whose happiness, being extremely dear to me, will always constitute no inconsiderable part of my own.

Impressed with the liveliest sensibility on this pleasing occasion, I will claim the indulgence of dilating the more copiously on the subjects of our mutual felicitation. When we consider the magnitude of the prize we contended for, the doubtful nature of the contest, and the favorable manner in which it has terminated, we shall find the greatest possible reason for gratitude and rejoicing. This is a theme that will afford infinite delight to every benevolent and liberal mind, whether the event in contemplation be considered as the source of present enjoyment, or the parent of future happiness; and we shall have equal occasion to felicitate ourselves on the lot which Providence has assigned us, whether we view it in a natural, a political, or moral point of light.

The citizens of America, placed in the most enviable condition, as the sole lords and proprietors of a vast tract of continent, comprehending all the various soils and climates of the world, and abounding with all the necessaries and conveniences

of life, are now, by the late satisfactory pacification, acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and independency. They are, from this period, to be considered as the actors on a most conspicuous theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designated by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity. Here they are not only surrounded with every thing, which can contribute to the completion of private and domestic enjoyment; but Heaven has crowned all its other blessings, by giving a fairer opportunity for political happiness, than any other nation has ever been favored with. Nothing can illustrate these observations more forcibly, than a recollection of the happy conjuncture of times and circumstances, under which our republic assumed its rank among the nations. The foundation of our empire was not laid in the gloomy age of ignorance and superstition; but at an epoch when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any former period. The researches of the human mind after social happiness have been carried to a great extent; the treasures of knowledge, acquired by the labors of philosophers, sages, and legislators, through a long succession of years, are laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the establishment of our forms of government. The free cultivation of letters, the unbounded extension of commerce, the progressive refinement of manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and, above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had a meliorating

influence on mankind and increased the blessings of society. At this auspicious period, the United States came into existence as a nation; and, if their citizens should not be completely free and happy, the fault will be entirely their own.

Such is our situation, and such are our prospects; but notwithstanding the cup of blessing is thus reached out to us; notwithstanding happiness is ours, if we have a disposition to seize the occasion and make it our own; yet it appears to me there is an option still left to the United States of America, that it is in their choice, and depends upon their conduct, whether they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable, as a nation. This is the time of their political probation; this is the moment when the eyes of the whole world are turned upon them; this is the moment to establish or ruin their national character for ever; this is the favorable moment to give such a tone to our federal government, as will enable it to answer the ends of its institution, or this may be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the powers of the Union, annihilating the cement of the confederation, and exposing us to become the sport of European politics, which may play one State against another, to prevent their growing importance, and to serve their own interested purposes. For, according to the system of policy the States shall adopt at this moment, they will stand or fall; and by their confirmation or lapse it is yet to be decided, whether the revolution must ultimately be considered as a blessing or a curse; a blessing or a curse, not to the

present age alone, for with our fate will the destiny of unborn millions be involved.

With this conviction of the importance of the present crisis, silence in me would be a crime. I will therefore speak to your Excellency the language of freedom and of sincerity without disguise. I am aware, however, that those who differ from me in political sentiment, may perhaps remark, I am stepping out of the proper line of my duty, and may possibly ascribe to arrogance or ostentation, what I know is alone the result of the purest intention. But the rectitude of my own heart, which disdains such unworthy motives; the part I have hitherto acted in life; the determination I have formed, of not taking any share in public business hereafter; the ardent desire I feel, and shall continue to manifest, of quietly enjoying, in private life, after all the toils of war, the benefits of a wise and liberal government, will, I flatter myself, sooner or later convince my countrymen, that I could have no sinister views in delivering, with so little reserve, the opinions contained in this address.

There are four things, which, I humbly conceive, are essential to the well-being, I may even venture to say, to the existence of the United States, as an independent power.

First. An indissoluble union of the States under one federal head.

Secondly. A sacred regard to public justice.

Thirdly. The adoption of a proper peace establishment; and,

Fourthly. The prevalence of that pacific and

friendly disposition among the people of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies; to make those mutual concessions, which are requisite to the general prosperity; and, in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community.

These are the pillars on which the glorious fabric of our independency and national character must be supported. Liberty is the basis; and whoever would dare to sap the foundation, or overturn the structure, under whatever specious pretext he may attempt it, will merit the bitterest execration, and the severest punishment, which can be inflicted by his injured country.

On the three first articles I will make a few observations, leaving the last to the good sense and serious consideration of those immediately concerned.

Under the first head, although it may not be necessary or proper for me, in this place, to enter into a particular disquisition on the principles of the Union, and to take up the great question which has been frequently agitated, whether it be expedient and requisite for the States to delegate a larger proportion of power to Congress, or not; yet it will be a part of my duty, and that of every true patriot, to assert without reserve, and to insist upon, the following positions. That, unless the States will suffer Congress to exercise those prerogatives they are undoubtedly invested with by the constitution, every thing must very rapidly tend

to anarchy and confusion. That it is indispensable to the happiness of the individual States, that there should be lodged somewhere a supreme power to regulate and govern the general concerns of the confederated republic, without which the Union cannot be of long duration. That there must be a faithful and pointed compliance, on the part of every State, with the late proposals and demands of Congress, or the most fatal consequences will ensue. That whatever measures have a tendency to dissolve the Union, or contribute to violate or lessen the sovereign authority, ought to be considered as hostile to the liberty and independency of America, and the authors of them treated accordingly. And lastly, that unless we can be enabled, by the concurrence of the States, to participate of the fruits of the revolution, and enjoy the essential benefits of civil society, under a form of government so free and uncorrupted, so happily guarded against the danger of oppression, as has been devised and adopted by the articles of confederation, it will be a subject of regret, that so much blood and treasure have been lavished for no purpose, that so many sufferings have been encountered without a compensation, and that so many sacrifices have been made in vain.

Many other considerations might here be adduced to prove, that, without an entire conformity to the spirit of the Union, we cannot exist as an independent power. It will be sufficient for my purpose to mention but one or two, which seem to me of the greatest importance. It is only in our united

character, as an empire, that our independence is acknowledged, that our power can be regarded, or our credit supported, among foreign nations. The treaties of the European powers with the United States of America will have no validity on a dissolution of the Union. We shall be left nearly in a state of nature; or we may find, by our own unhappy experience, that there is a natural and necessary progression from the extreme of anarchy to the extreme of tyranny, and that arbitrary power is most easily established on the ruins of liberty, abused to licentiousness.

As to the second article, which respects the performance of public justice, Congress have, in their late address to the United States, almost exhausted the subject; they have explained their ideas so fully, and have enforced the obligations the States are under, to render complete justice to all the public creditors, with so much dignity and energy, that, in my opinion, no real friend to the honor or independency of America can hesitate a single moment, respecting the propriety of complying with the just and honorable measures proposed. If their arguments do not produce conviction, I know of nothing that will have greater influence: especially when we recollect, that the system referred to, being the result of the collected wisdom of the continent, must be esteemed, if not perfect, certainly the least objectionable of any that could be devised; and that, if it shall not be carried into immediate execution, a national bankruptcy, with all its deplorable consequences, will take place, before any

different plan can possibly be proposed and adopted. So pressing are the present circumstances, and such is the alternative now offered to the States.

The ability of the country to discharge the debts, which have been incurred in its defence, is not to be doubted; an inclination, I flatter myself, will not be wanting. The path of our duty is plain before us; honesty will be found, on every experiment, to be the best and only true policy. Let us then, as a nation, be just; let us fulfil the public contracts, which Congress had undoubtedly a right to make for the purpose of carrying on the war, with the same good faith we suppose ourselves bound to perform our private engagements. In the mean time, let an attention to the cheerful performance of their proper business, as individuals and as members of society, be earnestly inculcated on the citizens of America; then will they strengthen the hands of government, and be happy under its protection; every one will reap the fruit of his labors, every one will enjoy his own acquisitions, without molestation and without danger.

In this state of absolute freedom and perfect security, who will grudge to yield a very little of his property to support the common interest of society, and insure the protection of government? Who does not remember the frequent declarations, at the commencement of the war, that we should be completely satisfied, if, at the expense of one half, we could defend the remainder of our possessions? Where is the man to be found, who wishes to re-

main indebted for the defence of his own person and property to the exertions, the bravery, and the blood of others, without making one generous effort to repay the debt of honor and gratitude? In what part of the continent shall we find any man, or body of men, who would not blush to stand up and propose measures purposely calculated to rob the soldier of his stipend, and the public creditor of his due? And were it possible, that such a flagrant instance of injustice could ever happen, would it not excite the general indignation, and tend to bring down upon the authors of such measures the aggravated vengeance of Heaven? If, after all, a spirit of disunion, or a temper of obstinacy and perverseness should manifest itself in any of the States; if such an ungracious disposition should attempt to frustrate all the happy effects that might be expected to flow from the Union; if there should be a refusal to comply with the requisition for funds to discharge the annual interest of the public debts; and if that refusal should revive again all those jealousies, and produce all those evils, which are now happily removed, Congress, who have, in all their transactions, shown a great degree of magnanimity and justice, will stand justified in the sight of God and man; and the State alone, which puts itself in opposition to the aggregate wisdom of the continent, and follows such mistaken and pernicious counsels, will be responsible for all the consequences.

For my own part, conscious of having acted, while a servant of the public, in the manner I con-

ceived best suited to promote the real interests of my country; having, in consequence of my fixed belief, in some measure pledged myself to the army, that their country would finally do them complete and ample justice; and not wishing to conceal any instance of my official conduct from the eyes of the world, I have thought proper to transmit to your Excellency the enclosed collection of papers, relative to the half-pay and commutation granted by Congress to the officers of the army. From these communications, my decided sentiments will be clearly comprehended, together with the conclusive reasons which induced me, at an early period, to recommend the adoption of this measure, in the most earnest and serious manner. As the proceedings of Congress, the army, and myself, are open to all, and contain, in my opinion, sufficient information to remove the prejudices and errors, which may have been entertained by any, I think it unnecessary to say any thing more than just to observe, that the resolutions of Congress, now alluded to, are undoubtedly as absolutely binding upon the United States, as the most solemn acts of confederation or legislation.

As to the idea, which, I am informed, has in some instances prevailed, that the half-pay and commutation are to be regarded merely in the odious light of a pension, it ought to be exploded for ever. That provision should be viewed, as it really was, a reasonable compensation offered by Congress, at a time when they had nothing else to give to the officers of the army for services then to be per-

formed. It was the only means to prevent a total dereliction of the service. It was a part of their hire. I may be allowed to say, it was the price of their blood, and of your independency; it is therefore more than a common debt, it is a debt of honor; it can never be considered as a pension or gratuity, nor be cancelled until it is fairly discharged.

With regard to a distinction between officers and soldiers, it is sufficient that the uniform experience of every nation of the world, combined with our own, proves the utility and propriety of the discrimination. Rewards, in proportion to the aids the public derives from them, are unquestionably due to all its servants. In some lines, the soldiers have perhaps generally had as ample a compensation for their services, by the large bounties which have been paid to them, as their officers will receive in the proposed commutation; in others, if, besides the donation of lands, the payment of arrearages of clothing and wages (in which articles all the component parts of the army must be put upon the same footing), we take into the estimate the douceurs many of the soldiers have received, and the gratuity of one year's full pay, which is promised to all, possibly their situation (every circumstance being duly considered) will not be deemed less eligible than that of the officers. Should a further reward, however, be judged equitable, I will venture to assert, no one will enjoy greater satisfaction than myself, on seeing an exemption from taxes for a limited time, (which has been petitioned for in some instances,) or any other

adequate immunity or compensation granted to the brave defenders of their country's cause; but neither the adoption or rejection of this proposition will in any manner affect, much less militate against, the act of Congress, by which they have offered five years' full pay, in lieu of the half-pay for life, which had been before promised to the officers of the army.

Before I conclude the subject of public justice, I cannot omit to mention the obligations this country is under to that meritorious class of veteran non-commissioned officers and privates, who have been discharged for inability, in consequence of the resolution of Congress of the 23d of April, 1782, on an annual pension for life. Their peculiar sufferings, their singular merits, and claims to that provision, need only be known, to interest all the feelings of humanity in their behalf. Nothing but a punctual payment of their annual allowance can rescue them from the most complicated misery; and nothing could be a more melancholy and distressing sight, than to behold those, who have shed their blood or lost their limbs in the service of their country, without a shelter, without a friend, and without the means of obtaining any of the necessaries or comforts of life, compelled to beg their daily bread from door to door. Suffer me to recommend those of this description, belonging to your State, to the warmest patronage of your Excellency and your legislature.

It is necessary to say but a few words on the third topic which was proposed, and which regards par-

ticularly the defence of the republic; as there can be little doubt but Congress will recommend a proper peace establishment for the United States, in which a due attention will be paid to the importance of placing the militia of the Union upon a regular and respectable footing. If this should be the case, I would beg leave to urge the great advantage of it in the strongest terms. The militia of this country must be considered as the palladium of our security, and the first effectual resort in case of hostility. It is essential, therefore, that the same system should pervade the whole; that the formation and discipline of the militia of the continent should be absolutely uniform, and that the same species of arms, accoutrements, and military apparatus, should be introduced in every part of the United States. No one, who has not learned it from experience, can conceive the difficulty, expense, and confusion, which result from a contrary system, or the vague arrangements which have hitherto prevailed.

If, in treating of political points, a greater latitude than usual has been taken in the course of this address, the importance of the crisis, and the magnitude of the objects in discussion, must be my apology. It is, however, neither my wish or expectation, that the preceding observations should claim any regard, except so far as they shall appear to be dictated by a good intention, consonant to the immutable rules of justice, calculated to produce a liberal system of policy, and founded on whatever experience may have been acquired by a long and

close attention to public business. Here I might speak with the more confidence, from my actual observations; and, if it would not swell this letter (already too prolix) beyond the bounds I had prescribed to myself, I could demonstrate to every mind open to conviction, that in less time, and with much less expense, than has been incurred, the war might have been brought to the same happy conclusion, if the resources of the continent could have been properly drawn forth; that the distresses and disappointments, which have very often occurred, have, in too many instances, resulted more from a want of energy in the Continental government, than a deficiency of means in the particular States; that the inefficacy of measures arising from the want of an adequate authority in the supreme power, from a partial compliance with the requisitions of Congress in some of the States, and from a failure of punctuality in others, while it tended to damp the zeal of those, which were more willing to exert themselves, served also to accumulate the expenses of the war, and to frustrate the best concerted plans; and that the discouragement occasioned by the complicated difficulties and embarrassments, in which our affairs were by this means involved, would have long ago produced the dissolution of any army, less patient, less virtuous, and less persevering, than that which I have had the honor to command. But, while I mention these things, which are notorious facts, as the defects of our federal constitution, particularly in the prose-

cution of a war, I beg it may be understood, that, as I have ever taken a pleasure in gratefully acknowledging the assistance and support I have derived from every class of citizens, so shall I always be happy to do justice to the unparalleled exertions of the individual States on many interesting occasions.

I have thus freely disclosed what I wished to make known, before I surrendered up my public trust to those who committed it to me. The task is now accomplished. I now bid adieu to your Excellency as the chief magistrate of your State, at the same time I bid a last farewell to the cares of office, and all the employments of public life.

It remains, then, to be my final and only request, that your Excellency will communicate these sentiments to your legislature at their next meeting, and that they may be considered as the legacy of one, who has ardently wished, on all occasions, to be useful to his country, and who, even in the shade of retirement, will not fail to implore the Divine benediction upon it.

I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field; and finally, that he would most gra-

kindly be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

I have the honor to be, with much esteem and respect, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant.[1]

[1] *Washington's letter produced a marked effect. In Virginia the legislature was in session discussing the impost law which it had once accepted and afterward rejected. See p. 181, note. On June 11th, it again declined to give Congress the power to lay an impost. Shortly afterward, "the arrival of Gen. Washington's letter excited this hope [that the impost law would be adopted] in the minds of the sanguine; but its effect is momentary; and perhaps it will hereafter be accepted by the assembly with disgust. For the murmur is free and general against what is called the unsolicited obtrusion of his advice." —Randolph to Madison, 28 June, 1783, cited in Ford.* But *Randolph proved a false prophet.* After Washington's letter *was read, the legislature ordered a bill granting the impost to be reported, and it was finally passed by a unanimous vote. In Pennsylvania, the legislature thanked him for "the inestimable legacy bequeathed to his country." That of Maryland said: "By your letter you have taught us how to value, preserve, and improve that liberty which your services under the smiles of Providence have secured. If the powers given to Congress by the Confederation should be found incompetent to the purposes of the Union, our constituents will readily consent to enlarge them." Jefferson described the letter as "deservedly applauded by the world." Governor Hancock in Massachusetts and Governor Clinton in New York appealed to it when addressing their legislatures in behalf of a stronger union, while the President of Congress ordered it sent to our diplomatic representatives in Europe as an evidence of Washington's "inimitable character."*

FAREWELL ORDERS TO THE ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES [1]

ROCKY HILL, NEAR PRINCETON,
[Sunday] 2 November 1783.

The United States in Congress assembled, after giving the most honorable testimony to the merits of the federal armies, and presenting them with the thanks of their country for their long, eminent and faithful services, having thought proper, by their proclamation bearing date the 18th day of October last, to discharge such part of the troops as were engaged for the war, and to permit the officers on furlough to retire from service from and after to-morrow; which proclamation having been communicated in the public papers for the information and government of all concerned, it only remains for the Commander-in-chief to address himself once more, and that for the last time, to the armies of the United States (however widely dispersed the individuals who compose them may be), and to bid them an affectionate, a long farewell.

But before the Commander-in-chief takes his final leave of those he holds most dear, he wishes to indulge himself a few moments in calling to mind a slight review of the past. He will then take the liberty of exploring with his military friends their future prospects, of advising the general line

[1] By a series of resolutions beginning on May 26, 1783, Congress had directed the Commander-in-chief to grant furloughs to the troops under his command. By a resolution adopted October 18, 1783, it was ordered that all troops who were engaged to serve during the war and who were then on furlough should on November 3d following be given a full discharge.

of conduct, which, in his opinion, ought to be pursued; and he will conclude the address by expressing the obligations he feels himself under for the spirited and able assistance he has experienced from them, in the performance of an arduous office.

A contemplation of the complete attainment (at a period earlier than could have been expected) of the object, for which we contended against so formidable a power, cannot but inspire us with astonishment and gratitude. The disadvantageous circumstances on our part, under which the war was undertaken, can never be forgotten. The singular interpositions of Providence in our feeble condition were such, as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving; while the unparalleled perseverance of the armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle.

It is not the meaning nor within the compass of this address, to detail the hardships peculiarly incident to our service, or to describe the distresses, which in several instances have resulted from the extremes of hunger and nakedness, combined with the rigors of an inclement season; nor is it necessary to dwell on the dark side of our past affairs. Every American officer and soldier must now console himself for any unpleasant circumstances, which may have occurred, by a recollection of the uncommon scenes in which he has been called to act no inglorious part, and the astonishing events of which he has been a witness; events which have

seldom, if ever before, taken place on the stage of human action; nor can they probably ever happen again. For who has before seen a disciplined army formed at once from such raw materials? Who, that was not a witness, could imagine, that the most violent local prejudices would cease so soon; and that men, who came from the different parts of the continent, strongly disposed by the habits of education to despise and quarrel with each other, would instantly become but one patriotic band of brothers? Or who, that was not on the spot, can trace the steps by which such a wonderful revolution has been effected, and such a glorious period put to all our warlike toils?

It is universally acknowledged, that the enlarged prospects of happiness, opened by the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, almost exceeds the power of description. And shall not the brave men, who have contributed so essentially to these inestimable acquisitions, retiring victorious from the field of war to the field of agriculture, participate in all the blessings, which have been obtained? In such a republic, who will exclude them from the rights of citizens, and the fruits of their labors? In such a country, so happily circumstanced, the pursuits of commerce and the cultivation of the soil will unfold to industry the certain road to competence. To those hardy soldiers, who are actuated by the spirit of adventure, the fisheries will afford ample and profitable employment; and the extensive and fertile regions of the West will yield a most happy asylum to those, who, fond of

domestic enjoyment, are seeking for personal independence. Nor is it possible to conceive, that any one of the United States will prefer a national bankruptcy, and a dissolution of the Union, to a compliance with the requisitions of Congress, and the payment of its just debts; so that the officers and soldiers may expect considerable assistance, in recommencing their civil occupations, from the sums due to them from the public, which must and will most inevitably be paid.

In order to effect this desirable purpose, and to remove the prejudices, which may have taken posession of the minds of any of the good people of the States, it is earnestly recommended to all the troops, that, with strong attachments to the Union, they should carry with them into civil society the most conciliating dispositions, and that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens, than they have been persevering and victorious as soldiers. What though there should be some envious individuals, who are unwilling to pay the debt the public has contracted, or to yield the tribute due to merit; yet let such unworthy treatment produce no invective, or any instance of intemperate conduct. Let it be remembered, that the unbiassed voice of the free citizens of the United States has promised the just reward and given the merited applause. Let it be known and remembered, that the reputation of the federal armies is established beyond the reach of malevolence; and let a consciousness of their achievements and fame still incite the men, who composed them,

to honorable actions; under the persuasion that the private virtues of economy, prudence, and industry, will not be less amiable in civil life, than the more splendid qualities of valor, perseverance, and enterprise were in the field. Every one may rest assured, that much, very much, of the future happiness of the officers and men, will depend upon the wise and manly conduct, which shall be adopted by them when they are mingled with the great body of the community. And, although the General has so frequently given it as his opinion in the most public and explicit manner, that, unless the principles of the Federal Government were properly supported, and the powers of the Union increased, the honor, dignity, and justice of the nation would be lost forever; yet he cannot help repeating, on this occasion, so interesting a sentiment, and leaving it as his last injunction to every officer and every soldier, who may view the subject in the same serious point of light, to add his best endeavors to those of his worthy fellow citizens towards effecting these great and valuable purposes, on which our very existence as a nation so materially depends.

The Commander-in-chief conceives little is now wanting, to enable the soldier, to change the military character into that of the citizen, but that steady and decent tenor of behavior, which has generally distinguished, not only the army under his immediate command, but the different detachments and separate armies, through the course of the war. From their good sense and prudence he anticipates the happiest consequences; and, while

he congratulates them on the glorious occasion, which renders their services in the field no longer necessary, he wishes to express the strong obligations he feels himself under for the assistance he has received from every class and in every instance. He presents his thanks in the most serious and affectionate manner to the general officers, as well for their counsel on many interesting occasions, as for their ardor in promoting the success of the plans he had adopted; to the commandants of regiments and corps, and to the other officers, for their great zeal and attention in carrying his orders promptly into execution; to the staff, for their alacrity and exactness in performing the duties of their several departments; and to the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, for their extraordinary patience and suffering, as well as their invincible fortitude in action. To the various branches of the army, the General takes this last and solemn opportunity of professing his inviolable attachment and friendship. He wishes more than bare professions were in his power; that he were really able to be useful to them all in future life. He flatters himself, however, they will do him the justice to believe, that whatever could with propriety be attempted by him has been done.

And being now to conclude these his last public orders, to take his ultimate leave in a short time of the military character, and to bid a final adieu to the armies he has so long had the honor to command, he can only again offer in their behalf his recommendations to their grateful country, and his

prayers to the God of armies. May ample justice be done them here, and may the choicest of Heaven's favors, both here and hereafter, attend those, who, under the Divine auspices, have secured innumerable blessings for others. With these wishes and this benediction, the Commander-in-chief is about to retire from service. The curtain of separation will soon be drawn, and the military scene to him will be closed for ever.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

ANNAPOLIS, 20 December, 1783.

SIR,

I take the earliest opportunity to inform Congress of my arrival in this city, with the intention of asking leave to resign the commission I have the honor of holding in their service. It is essential for me to know their pleasure, and in what manner it will be most proper to offer my resignation, whether in writing, or at an audience. I shall therefore request to be honored with the necessary information, that, being apprized of the sentiments of Congress, I may regulate my conduct accordingly. I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

[1] A committee, composed of Jefferson, Gerry, and McHenry, prepared the following report, which was adopted by Congress:

"Resolved That the order for the public audience of General Washington be as follows:

"1. The President and members are to be seated and covered and the Secy. to be standing by the side of the president.

"2. The arrival of the general is to be announced by the Messenger to the Secy.—who is thereupon to introduce the general attended by his Aids to the hall of Congress.

"3. The general being conducted to a chair by the Secy. is to

TO BARON STEUBEN

ANNAPOLIS, 23 December, 1783.

MY DEAR BARON,

Although I have taken frequent opportunities, both in public and private, of acknowledging your great zeal, attention, and abilities, in performing the duties of your office; yet I wish to make use of this last moment of my public life to signify, in the strongest terms, my entire approbation of your conduct, and to express my sense of the obligations the public is under to you, for your faithful and meritorious services.

I beg you will be convinced, my dear Sir, that I should rejoice if it could ever be in my power to serve you more essentially, than by expressions of regard and affection; but, in the mean time, I am persuaded you will not be displeased with this fare-

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be seated with an Aid on each side standing and the Secy. is to resume his place.

"4. After a proper time for the arrangement of spectators silence is to be ordered by the Secy.—if necessary and the president is to address the general in the following words:

"'Sir, The United States in Congress assembled are prepared to receive your communications.'

"Where upon the general is to arise and address Congress, after which he is to deliver his Commission and a copy of his address to the president.

"5. The general having resumed his place the President is to deliver the answer of Congress which the general is to receive standing.

"6. The President having finished, the Secy. is to deliver the general a copy of the answer and the general is then to take his leave.

"When the general rises to make his address and also when he retires he is to bow to Congress, which they are to return by uncovering without bowing. 22 December, 1783."—*Sparks.*

well token of my sincere friendship and esteem for you.

This is the last letter I shall write, while I continue in the service of my country. The hour of my resignation is fixed at twelve to day; after which, I shall become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac, where I shall be glad to embrace you, and testify the great esteem and consideration with which I am, my dear Baron, &c.

GENERAL WASHINGTON'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS ON RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION [1]

ANNAPOLIS, 23 December, 1783.

MR. PRESIDENT,

The great events, on which my resignation depended, having at length taken place, I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress, and of presenting myself before them, to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the Service of my Country.

Happy in the confirmation of our Independence and Sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence; a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the

[1] The original manuscript of this address in Washington's own writing is in the library of the Maryland Historical Society.

supreme Power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven.

The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations; and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence, and the assistance I have received from my Countrymen, encreases with every review of the momentous contest.

While I repeat my obligations to the Army in general, I should do injustice to my own feelings not to acknowledge, in this place, the peculiar services and distinguished merits of the Gentlemen, who have been attached to my person during the war. It was impossible that the choice of confidential officers to compose my family should have been more fortunate. Permit me, Sir, to recommend in particular those, who have continued in Service to the present moment, as worthy of the favorable notice and patronage of Congress.

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life, by commending the Interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to his holy keeping.

Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action; and, bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.

III

The Formation and Adoption of the Constitution

No nobler figure ever stood in
the forefront of a nation's life.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

III

The Formation and Adoption of the Constitution

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON, IN CONGRESS

NEWBURG, 31 March, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

I have duly received your favors of the 17th and 24th ultimo. I rejoice most exceedingly that there is an end to our warfare, and that such a field is opening to our view, as will, with wisdom to direct the cultivation of it, make us a great, a respectable, and happy people; but it must be improved by other means than State politics, and unreasonable jealousies and prejudices, or (it requires not the second sight to see that) we shall be instruments in the hands of our enemies, and those European powers, who may be jealous of our greatness in union, to dissolve the confederation. But, to obtain this, although the way seems extremely plain, is not so easy.

My wish to see the union of these States established upon liberal and permanent principles, and inclination to contribute my mite in pointing out

the defects of the present constitution, are equally great. All my private letters have teemed with these sentiments, and, whenever this topic has been the subject of conversation, I have endeavored to diffuse and enforce them; but how far any further essay by me might be productive of the wished-for end, or appear to arrogate more than belongs to me, depends so much upon popular opinions, and the temper and dispositions of the people, that it is not easy to decide. I shall be obliged to you, however, for the thoughts, which you promised me on this subject, and as soon as you can make it convenient.

No man in the United States is or can be more deeply impressed with the necessity of a reform in our present confederation than myself. No man perhaps has felt the bad effects of it more sensibly; for to the defects thereof, and want of powers in Congress, may justly be ascribed the prolongation of the war, and consequently the expenses occasioned by it. More than half the perplexities I have experienced in the course of my command, and almost the whole of the difficulties and distress of the army, have their origin here. But still, the prejudices of some, the designs of others, and the mere machinery of the majority, make address and management necessary to give weight to opinions, which are to combat the doctrines of those different classes of men in the field of politics.

I would have been more full on this subject, but the bearer (in the clothing department) is waiting.

I wish you may understand what I have written. I am, etc.[1] * * *

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

HEAD-QAS., NEWBURG, 5 April, 1783.

MY DEAR MARQS.,

* * * We stand, now, an Independent People, and have yet to learn political Tactics. We are placed among the nations of the Earth, and have a character to establish; but how we shall acquit ourselves, time must discover. The probability (at least I fear it), is that local or State politics will interfere too much with the more liberal and extensive plan of government, which wisdom and foresight, freed from the mist of prejudice, would dictate; and that we shall be guilty of many blunders in treading this boundless theatre, before we shall have arrived at any perfection in this art; in a word, that the experience, which is purchased at the price of difficulties and distress, will alone convince us that the honor, power, and true Interest of this Country must be measured by a Continental scale, and that every departure therefrom weakens the Union, and may ultimately break the band that holds us together. To avert these evils, to form a Constitution, that will give consistency, stability,

[1] "It remains only for the States to be wise, and to establish their independence on the basis of an inviolable, efficacious union, and a firm confederation, which may prevent their being made the sport of European policy. May heaven give them wisdom to adopt the measures still necessary for this important purpose."—*Washington to Major-General Greene*, 31 March, 1783.

and dignity to the Union, and sufficient powers to the great Council of the nation for general purposes, is a duty which is incumbent upon every man, who wishes well to his Country, and will meet with my aid as far as it can be rendered in the private walks of life: for hence forward my mind shall be unbent and I will endeavor to glide gently down the stream of life till I come to that abyss from whence no traveller is permitted to return.
* * *

TO DR. WILLIAM GORDON

HEAD QUARTERS, NEWBURG,
8 July, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

* * * It now rests with the Confederated Powers, by the line of conduct they mean to adopt, to make this Country great, happy, and respectable; or to sink it into littleness—worse perhaps—into Anarchy and confusion; for certain I am, that unless adequate Powers are given to Congress for the *general* purposes of the Federal Union, that we shall soon moulder into dust and become contemptible in the eyes of Europe, if we are not made the sport of their Politicks. To suppose that the general concerns of this Country can be directed by thirteen heads, or one head without competent powers, is a solecism, the bad effects of which every man who has had the practical knowledge to judge from, that I have, is fully convinced of; tho' none perhaps has felt them in so forcible and distressing

a degree. The People at large, and at a distance from the theatre of action, who only know that the machine was kept in motion, and that they are at last arrived at the first object of their wishes, are satisfied with the event, without investigating the causes of the slow progress to it, or of the expences which have accrued, and which they have been unwilling to pay—great part of which has arisen from that want of energy in the Federal Constitution, which I am complaining of, and which I wish to see given to it by a Convention of the People, instead of hearing it remarked that, as we have worked through an arduous contest with the powers Congress already have (but which, by the by, have been gradually diminishing,) why should they be invested with more?

To say nothing of the invisible workings of Providence, which has conducted us through difficulties where no human foresight could point the way; it will appear evident to a close examiner, that there has been a concatenation of causes to produce this event; which in all probability, at no time, or under any other circumstances, will combine again—We deceive ourselves therefore by the mode of reasoning, and, what would be much worse, we may bring ruin upon ourselves by attempting to carry it into practice.

We are known by no other character among nations than as the United States—Massachusetts or Virginia is no better defined, nor any more thought of by Foreign Powers than the County of Worcester in Massachusetts is by Virginia, or

Gloucester County in Virginia is by Massachusetts, (respectable as they are); and yet these counties with as much propriety might oppose themselves to the Laws of the State in which they are, as an Individual State can oppose itself to the Federal Government, by which it is, or ought to be bound. Each of these counties has, no doubt, its local polity and Interests. These should be attended to, and brought before their respective legislatures with all the force their importance merits; but when they come in contact with the general Interest of the State, when superior considerations preponderate in favor of the whole, their voices should be heard no more. So should it be with individual States when compared to the Union, otherwise I think it may properly be asked for what purpose do we farcically pretend to be United? Why do Congress spend months together in deliberating upon, debating, and digesting plans, which are made as palatable, and as wholesome to the Constitution of this country as the nature of things will admit of, when some States will pay no attention to them, and others regard them but partially; by which means all those evils which proceed from delay, are felt by the whole; while the compliant States are not only suffering by these neglects, but in many instances are injured most capitally by their own exertions; which are wasted for want of the united effort. A hundred thousand men, coming one after another, cannot move a Ton weight; but the united strength of 50 would transport it with ease. So has it been with great part of the

expence which has been incurred [in] this War. In a word, I think the blood and treasure, which has been spent in it, has been lavished to little purpose, unless we can be better cemented; and that is not to be effected while so little attention is paid to the recommendations of the Sovereign Power.

To me it would seem not more absurd, to hear a traveller, who was setting out on a long journey, declare he would take no money in his pocket to defray the Expences of it, but rather depend upon Chance and Charity, lest he should misapply it—than are the expressions of so much fear of the powers and means of Congress.

For Heaven's sake, who are Congress? are they not the creatures of the People, amenable to them for their conduct, and dependent from day to day on their breath? Where then can be the danger of giving them such Powers as are adequate to the great ends of Government, and to all the general purposes of the Confederation (I repeat the word *general,* because I am no advocate for their having to do with the particular policy of any state, further than it concerns the Union at large)? What may be the consequences if they have not these Powers, I am at no loss to guess; and deprecate the worst; for sure I am, we shall, in a little time become as contemptible in the great scale of Politicks, as we now have it in our power to be respectable. And that, when the band of Union gets once broken, every thing ruinous to our future prospects is to be apprehended. The best that can come of it, in my humble opinion is, that we shall sink into

obscurity, unless our Civil broils should keep us in remembrance and fill the page of history with the direful consequences of them.

You say that, Congress loose time by pressing a mode that does not accord with the genius of the People, and will thereby, endanger the Union, and that it is the quantum they want. Permit me to ask if the quantum has not already been demanded? Whether it has been obtained? and whence proceeds the accumulated evils, and poignant distresses of many of the public Creditors —particularly in the Army? For my own part I hesitate not a moment to confess, that I see nothing wherein the Union is endangered by the late requisition of that body, but a prospect of much good, justice, and prosperity from the compliance with it. I know of no tax more convenient, none so agreeable, as that which every man may pay,— or let it alone, as his convenience, abilities, or Inclination shall prompt. I am therefore a warm friend to the impost. * * *

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

MOUNT VERNON, 18 January, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * That the prospect before us is, as you justly observe, fair, none can deny; but what use we shall make of it is exceedingly problematical; not but that I believe all things will come right at last, but like a young heir, come a little prematurely to a large inheritance, we shall wanton and run

riot until we have brought our reputation to the brink of ruin, and then like him shall have to labor with the current of opinion, when *compelled* perhaps to do what prudence and common policy pointed out, as plain as any problem in Euclid, in the first instance.

The disinclination of the individual States to yield competent powers to Congress for the federal government, their unreasonable jealousy of that body and of one another, and the disposition, which seems to pervade each, of being all-wise and all-powerful within itself, will, if there is not a change in the system, be our downfall as a nation. This is as clear to me as the A, B, C; and I think we have opposed Great Britain, and have arrived at the present state of peace and independency, to very little purpose, if we cannot conquer our own prejudices. The powers of Europe begin to see this, and our newly acquired friends, the British, are already and professedly acting upon this ground; and wisely too, if we are determined to persevere in our folly. They know that individual opposition to their measures is futile, and boast that we are not sufficiently united as a nation to give a general one! Is not the indignity alone of this declaration, while we are in the very act of pèace-making and conciliation, sufficient to stimulate us to vest more extensive and adequate powers in the sovereign of these United States?

For my own part, although I am returned to, and am now mingled with, the class of private citizens, and like them must suffer all the evils of

a tyranny, or of too great an extension of federal powers, I have no fears arising from this source, in my mind; but I have many, and powerful ones indeed, which predict the worst consequences, from a half-starved, limping government, that appears to be always moving upon crutches, and tottering at every step. Men chosen as the delegates in Congress are, cannot officially be dangerous. They depend upon the breath, nay, they are so much the creatures of the people, under the present constitution, that they can have no views, (which could possibly be carried into execution,) nor any interests distinct from those of their constituents. My political creed, therefore, is, to be wise in the choice of delegates, support them like gentlemen while they are our representatives, give them competent powers for all federal purposes, support them in the due exercise thereof, and, lastly, to compel them to close attendance in Congress during their delegation.[1] These things, under the present mode

[1] "Scarcely had the treaty [of peace with Great Britain] been ratified when several delegates who had come to Annapolis for that important act returned to their respective States. One was obliged to go home to take care of his sick child; another to marry; a third had very pressing personal business. I met one who told me that his wife called him back. It is thus that the federal assembly is scattered; and since the ratification has taken place, it has no longer been possible to form a congress of nine States; and yet that number is required to decide the most important affairs. The others are left to the decision of seven States, but there is often much difficulty in bringing them together; and when they do meet, they hardly do any business, because it is rarely that the seven States when present vote unanimously. In this way the time has passed since the month of June last. Almost no business has been done; and there is no prospect of a change for the better. Dele-

for and termination of elections, aided by annual instead of constant sessions, would, or I am exceedingly mistaken, make us one of the most wealthy, happy, respectable, and powerful nations, that ever inhabited the terrestrial globe. Without them, we shall, in my opinion, soon be every thing which is the direct reverse of them. * * *

TO JAMES McHENRY, IN CONGRESS

MOUNT VERNON, 22 August, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

* * * As I have ever been a friend to adequate powers of Congress, without which it is evident to me we never shall establish a national character, or be considered as on a respectable footing by the powers of Europe, I am sorry I cannot agree with you in sentiment not to enlarge them for the regulating of commerce. I have neither time nor abilities to enter into a full discussion of this subject; but it should seem to me, that your arguments against it, principally that some States may be more benefited than others by a commercial regulation, apply to every matter of general utility. Can there be a case enumerated, in which this argument has not its force in greater or less degree?

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gates truly attached to the public cause are in despair. Some wish congress to adjourn; others speak of a removal to Trenton; several regret Philadelphia. But this diversity of opinion hardly permits the hope that any one of the proposals will prevail; and congress appears to be condemned for some time longer to its present nullity."—*Luzerne to Rayneval*, 13 February, 1784. Luzerne was the minister of France to the United States.

We are either a united people under one head and for federal purposes, or we are thirteen independent sovereignties, eternally counteracting each other. If the former, whatever such a majority of the States, as the constitution points out, conceives to be for the benefit of the whole, should, in my humble opinion, be submitted to by the minority. Let the southern States always be represented; let them act more in union; let them declare freely and boldly what is for the interest of, and what is prejudicial to, their constituents; and there will, there must be, an accommodating spirit. In the establishment of a navigation act, this in a particular manner ought, and will doubtless be attended to. If the assent of nine, or as some propose of eleven States, is necessary to give validity to a commercial system, it insures this measure, or it cannot be obtained.

Wherein then lies the danger? But if your fears are in danger of being realized, cannot certain provisos in the ordinance guard against the evil; I see no difficulty in this, if the southern delegates would give their attendance in Congress, and follow the example, if it should be set them, of hanging together to counteract combinations. I confess to you candidly, that I can foresee no evil greater than disunion; than those *unreasonable* jealousies, (I say *unreasonable,* because I would have a *proper* jealousy always awake, and the United States on the watch to prevent individual States from infracting the constitution with impunity,) which are continually poisoning our minds

and filling them with imaginary evils to the prevention of real ones.

As you have asked the question, I answer, I do not know that we can enter upon a war of imposts with Great Britain, or any other foreign power; but we are certain, that this war has been waged against us by the former; *professedly* upon a belief that we never could unite in opposition to it; and I *believe* there is no way of putting an end to, or at least of stopping the increase of it, but to convince them of the contrary.[1] Our trade, in all

[1] On July 2, 1783, a British Order in Council was issued confining the trade between the United States and the British West Indies to British ships, British-built. "This proclamation," said John Adams, "is issued in full confidence that the United States cannot agree to act as one nation." As the trade in sugar between the United States and the West Indies was quite considerable, this was a serious blow to American commercial interests. Furthermore, in trading directly with Great Britain, American vessels could be employed in transporting only the commodities of the States of which their owners were citizens. Great Britain would recognize a Massachusetts ship or a Virginia ship, but not an American ship. That the British government appreciated the inability of Congress to enact satisfactory commercial regulations is shown by the reply of the Duke of Dorset to the American commissioners, March 26, 1785, when they informed him that they were ready to make a treaty of commerce with his government: "I have been instructed to learn from you, gentlemen, what is the real nature of the powers with which you are invested; whether you are merely commissioned by Congress, or have received separate powers from the separate States. The apparent determination of the respective States to regulate their own separate interests renders it absolutely necessary, toward forming a permanent system of commerce, that my court should be informed how far the commissioners can be duly authorized to enter into any engagements with Great Britain, which it may not be in the power of any one of the States to render totally fruitless and ineffectual."

points of view, is as essential to Great Britain, as hers is to us; and she will exchange it upon reciprocal and liberal terms, if better cannot be had. It can hardly be supposed, I think, that the carrying business will devolve wholly on the States you have named, or remain long with them if it should; for either Great Britain will depart from her present contracted system, or the policy of the southern States in framing the act of navigation, or by laws passed by themselves individually, will devise ways and means to encourage seamen for the transportation of the product of their respective countries or for the encouragement of. But, admitting the contrary, if the Union is considered as permanent, and on this I presume all superstructures are built, had we not better encourage seamen among ourselves, with less imports, than divide it with foreigners, and by increasing the amount of them ruin our merchants, and greatly injuring the mass of our citizens.

To sum up the whole, I foresee, or think I do it, the many advantages which will arise from giving powers of this kind to Congress (if a sufficient number of States are required to exercise them), without any evil, save that which may proceed from inattention, or want of wisdom in the formation of the act; whilst, without them, we stand in a ridiculous point of view in the eyes of the nations of the world, with whom we are attempting to enter into commercial treaties, without means of carrying them into effect; who must see and feel, that the Union or the States individually are sovereigns, as

best suits their purposes; in a word, that we are one nation today and thirteen tomorrow. Who will treat with us on such terms—but perhaps I have gone too far and therefore will only add, that Mrs. Washington offers her compliments and best wishes for you, and that with great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.[1]

TO JAMES WARREN

MOUNT VERNON, 7 October, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

The assurances of your friendship, after a silence of more than six years, are extremely pleasing to me. Friendship, formed under the circumstances that ours commenced are not easily eradicated; and I can assure you, that mine has undergone no diminution. Every occasion, therefore, of renewing it will give me pleasure, and I shall be happy at all times to hear of your welfare.

[1] " Great Britain, in her commercial policy is acting the same unwise part, with respect to herself, which seems to have influenced all her councils; and thereby is defeating her own ends: —the restriction of our trade, and her heavy imposts on the staple commodities of this country, will I conceive, immediately produce powers in Congress to regulate the Trade of the Union; which, more than probably would not have been obtained without in half a century. The mercantile interests of the *whole* Union are endeavoring to effect this, & will no doubt succeed; they see the necessity of a controuling power, and the futility, indeed the absurdity, of each State's enacting Laws for this purpose independent of one another.—This will be the case also, after a while, in all matters of common concern;—It is to be regretted, I confess, that Democratical States must always *feel* before they can *see*:— it is this that makes their Governments slow—but the people will be right at last."—*Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette*, 25 July, 1785.

The war, as you have very justly observed, has terminated most advantageously for America, and a fair field is presented to our view; but I confess to you freely, my dear Sir, that I do not think we possess wisdom or justice enough to cultivate it properly. Illiberality, jealousy, and local policy mix too much in all our public councils for the good government of the Union. In a word, the confederation appears to me to be little more than a shadow without the substance, and Congress a nugatory body, their ordinances being little attended to. To me it is a solecism in politics, indeed it is one of the most extraordinary things in nature, that we should confederate as a nation, and yet be afraid to give the rulers of that nation who are the creatures of our making, appointed for a limited and short duration, and who are amenable for every action and recallable at any moment, and are subject to all the evils, which they may be instrumental in producing, sufficient powers to order and direct the affairs of the same. By such policy as this the wheels of government are clogged, and our brightest prospects, and that high expectation, which was entertained of us by the wondering world, are turned into astonishment; and from the high ground on which we stood, we are descending into the vale of confusion and darkness.

That we have it in our power to become one of the most respectable nations upon earth, admits, in my humble opinion, of no doubt, if we would but pursue a wise, just, and liberal policy towards one another, and keep good faith with the rest of

the world. That our resources are ample and increasing, none can deny; but, while they are grudgingly applied, or not applied at all, we give a vital stab to public faith, and shall sink, in the eyes of Europe, into contempt.

It has long been a speculative question among philosophers and wise men, whether foreign commerce is of real advantage to any country; that is, whether the luxury, effeminacy, and corruptions, which are introduced along with it, are counterbalanced by the convenience and wealth which it brings with it. But the decision of this question is of very little importance to us. We have abundant reason to be convinced, that the spirit for trade, which pervades these States, is not to be restrained. It behoves us then to establish just principles; and this, any more than other matters of national concern, cannot be done by thirteen heads differently constructed and organized. The necessity, therefore, of a controlling power is obvious; and why it should be withheld is beyond my comprehension. * * *

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 10 May, 1786.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

* * * The account of and observations which you have made on the policy and practice of Great Britain at the other courts of Europe, respecting these States, I was but too well informed and con-

vinced of before. Unhappily for us, though their accounts are greatly exaggerated, yet our conduct has laid the foundation for them. It is one of the evils of democratical governments, that the people, not always seeing and frequently misled, must often feel before they can act right; but then evils of this nature seldom fail to work their own cure. It is to be lamented, nevertheless, that the remedies are so slow, and that those, who may wish to apply them seasonably, are not attended to before they suffer in person, in interest, and in reputation. I am not without hopes, that matters will take a more favorable turn in the federal constitution. The discerning part of the community have long since seen the necessity of giving adequate powers to Congress for national purposes, and the ignorant and designing must yield to it ere long. Several late acts of the different legislatures have a tendency thereto. Among these the impost, which is now acceded to by every State in the Union, (though clogged a little by that of New York,) will enable Congress to support the national credit in pecuniary matters better than it has been [1]; whilst a measure, in which this State has taken the lead at its last session, will, it is to be hoped, give efficient powers to that body for all commercial

[1] This refers to the amendment to the Articles of Confederation submitted to the States in 1783 by which Congress was authorized to impose certain duties on imports, the total proceeds of which were to be devoted to the payment of the public debt and the interest thereon. All the States save New York accepted the amendment. Washington's confidence in that State was misplaced. It rejected the amendment February 15, 1787.

purposes. This is a nomination of some of its first characters to meet other commissioners from the several States, in order to consider of and decide upon such powers, as shall be necessary for the sovereign power of them to act under; which are to be reported to the respective legislatures at their autumnal sessions, for, it is to be hoped, final adoption; thereby avoiding those tedious and futile deliberations, which result from recommendations and partial concurrences, at the same time that it places it at once in the power of Congress to meet European nations upon decisive and equal ground. All the legislatures, which I have heard from, have come into the proposition, and have made very judicious appointments. Much good is expected from this measure, and it is regretted by many, that more objects were not embraced by the meeting.[1] A general convention is talked of by many for the purpose of revising and correcting the defects of the federal government; but whilst this is the wish of some, it is the dread of others, from an opinion that matters are not yet sufficiently ripe for such an event.[2] * * *

[1] "My sentiments with respect to the federal government are well known. Publicly and privately have they been communicated without reserve; but my opinion is, that there is more wickedness than ignorance in the conduct of the States, or, in other words, in the conduct of those who have too much influence in the government of them; and until the curtain is withdrawn, and the private views and selfish principles, upon which these men act, are exposed to public notice, I have little hope of amendment without another convulsion."—*Washington to Henry Lee*, 5 April, 1786.

[2] Here again Washington's expectations were disappointed. At the Annapolis Convention, which met in September, 1786,

TO JOHN JAY

MOUNT VERNON, 18 May, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

* * * I coincide perfectly in sentiment with you, my dear Sir, that there are errors in our national government, which call for correction; loudly, I would add; but I shall find myself happily mistaken if the remedies are at hand. We are certainly in a delicate situation; but my fear is, that the people are not yet sufficiently *misled* to retract from error. To be plainer, I think there is more wickedness than ignorance mixed in our councils. Under this impression I scarcely know what opinion to entertain of a general convention. That it is necessary to revise and amend the articles of confederation, I entertain no doubt; but what may be the consequences of such an attempt is doubtful. Yet something must be done, or the fabric must fall, for it certainly is tottering.

Ignorance and design are difficult to combat. Out of these proceed illiberal sentiments, improper jealousies, and a train of evils which oftentimes in republican governments must be sorely felt before they can be removed. The former, that is ignorance, being a fit soil for the latter to work in, tools

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only five States were represented, and when the members assembled they felt so hampered by the indifference of the absent States that they did nothing but adopt an address, prepared by Alexander Hamilton, urging Congress to call another convention the following year for the consideration of the defects of the existing government. For Hamilton's address, see his *Works* (Lodge, editor), i., 319, and Evans, *Writings of Hamilton.*

are employed by them which a generous mind would disdain to use; and which nothing but time, and their own puerile or wicked productions, can show the inefficacy and dangerous tendency of. I think often of our situation, and view it with concern. From the high ground we stood upon, from the plain path which invited our footsteps, to be so fallen! so lost! it is really mortifying. But virtue, I fear, has in a great degree taken its departure from our land, and the want of a disposition to do justice is the source of the national embarrassments; for, whatever guise or colorings are given to them, this I apprehend is the origin of the evils we now feel, and probably shall labor under for some time yet. With respectful compliments to Mrs. Jay, and sentiments of sincere friendship, I am, dear Sir, &c.[1]

TO JOHN JAY

MOUNT VERNON, 1 August, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I have to thank you very sincerely for your interesting letter of the 27th of June, as well as for

[1] "Is it not among the most unaccountable things in nature, that the representation of a great country should generally be so thin as not to be able to execute the functions of government? To what is this to be ascribed? Is it the result of political manœuvre in some States, or is it owing to supineness or want of means? Be the causes what they may, it is shameful and disgusting. In a word, it hurts us. Our character as a nation is dwindling; and what it must come to, if a change should not soon take place, our enemies have foretold; for in truth we seem either not capable, or not willing, to take care of ourselves."—*Washington to William Grayson*, 26 July, 1786.

the other communications you had the goodness to make at the same time. I am sorry to be assured, of what indeed I had little doubt before, that we have been guilty of violating the treaty in some instances.[1] What a misfortune it is, the British should have so well grounded a pretext for their palpable infractions! And what a disgraceful part, out of the choice of difficulties before us, are we to act!

Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own. What the event will be, is also beyond the reach of my foresight. We have errors to correct. We have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation. Experience has taught us, that men will not adopt and carry into execution measures the best calculated for

[1] One of the most glaring evidences of the weakness of Congress was its inability to enforce the treaty of peace with Great Britain. The treaty stipulated that Congress should earnestly recommend to the States to pass acts for the protection of loyalists who desired to resume their residences in the States. Congress kept its promise, but most of the States declined to comply with the request. Many of the loyalists who returned found their property confiscated, and they could obtain no relief. The treaty also stipulated that private debts due to British subjects at the outbreak of the war should be paid. But several of the States had already passed laws for the confiscation of such debts, and Massachusetts and Pennsylvania enacted similar acts even after the treaty was made. The British government then declared that it would retain possession of the posts on the frontier until these obstacles to the enforcement of the treaty were removed. Similar difficulties were encountered in enforcing treaties with other countries. "The files of Congress," wrote Madison, "contain complaints already from almost every nation with which treaties have been formed."

their own good, without the intervention of a coercive power. I do not conceive we can exist long as a nation without having lodged some where a power, which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State governments extends over the several States.

To be fearful of investing Congress, constituted as that body is, with ample authorities for national purposes, appears to me the very climax of popular absurdity and madness. Could Congress exert them for the detriment of the public, without injuring themselves in an equal or greater proportion? Are not their interests inseparably connected with those of their constituents? By the rotation of appointment, must they not mingle frequently with the mass of citizens? Is it not rather to be apprehended, if they were possessed of the powers before described, that the individual members would be induced to use them, on many occasions, very timidly and inefficaciously for fear of losing their popularity and future election? We must take human nature as we find it. Perfection falls not to the share of mortals. Many are of opinion, that Congress have too frequently made use of the suppliant, humble tone of requisition in applications to the States, when they had a right to assert their imperial dignity and command obedience. Be that as it may, requisitions are a perfect nullity where thirteen sovereign, independent, disunited States are in the habit of discussing and refusing compliance with them at their option. Requisitions are actually little better than a jest and

a by-word throughout the land. If you tell the legislatures they have violated the treaty of peace, and invaded the prerogatives of the confederacy, they will laugh in your face. What then is to be done? Things cannot go on in the same train for ever. It is much to be feared, as you observe, that the better kind of people, being disgusted with the circumstances, will have their minds prepared for any revolution whatever. We are apt to run from one extreme into another. To anticipate and prevent disastrous contingencies would be the part of wisdom and patriotism.

What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing. I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! What a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! What a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find, that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious! Would to God, that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.

Retired as I am from the world, I frankly acknowledge I cannot feel myself an unconcerned spectator. Yet, having happily assisted in bringing the ship into port, and having been fairly discharged, it is not my business to embark again on a sea of troubles. Nor could it be expected, that

my sentiments and opinions would have much weight on the minds of my countrymen. They have been neglected, though given as a last legacy in the most solemn manner. I had then perhaps some claims to public attention. I consider myself as having none at present. Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments, etc.

With sentiments of sincere esteem and friendship, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS

31 October, 1786.

My Dear Sir,

* * * The picture which you have exhibited, and the accounts which are published of the commotions and temper of numerous bodies in the eastern States, are equally to be lamented and deprecated. They exhibit a melancholy proof of what our transatlantic foe has predicted; and of another thing perhaps, which is still more to be regretted, and is yet more unaccountable, that mankind, when left to themselves, are unfit for their own government. I am mortified beyond expression, when I view the clouds, that have spread over the brightest morn that ever dawned upon any country. In a word, I am lost in amazement when I behold what intrigue, the interested views of desperate characters, ignorance and jealousy of the minor part, are capable of effecting, as a scourge on the major part of our fellow citizens of the Union; for it is hardly to be supposed, that the great body of the people,

though they will not act, can be so shortsighted or enveloped in darkness, as not to see rays of a distant sun through all this mist of intoxication and folly.[1]

You talk, my good Sir, of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts.[2] I know not where that influence is to be found, or, if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for the disorders. *Influence* is no *government.* Let us have one by which our lives, liberties, and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once. Under these impressions, my humble opinion is, that there is a call for decision. Know precisely what the insurgents aim at. If they have *real* grievances, redress them if possible; or acknowledge the justice of them, and your inability to do it in the present moment. If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once. If this is inadequate, *all* will be convinced, that the superstructure is bad, or wants support.

[1] "For God's sake tell me what is the cause of all these commotions? Do they proceed from licentiousness, British influence, disseminated by the Tories, or real grievances which admit of redress? If the latter, why were they delayed till the public mind had become so much agitated? If the former, why are not the powers of government tried at once? It is as well to be without, as not to live under their exercise. Commotions of this sort, like snow-balls, gather strength as they roll, if there is no opposition in the way to divide and crumble them."—*Washington to Humphreys*, 22 October, 1786.

[2] The years following the restoration of peace were years of great financial distress. Much property had been destroyed, business had been disturbed, debts had accumulated, the paper-money craze had taken possession of most of the States, and general discontent prevailed. Violent outbreaks against the State governments occurred, the most serious one being Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts.

To be more exposed in the eyes of the world, and more contemptible than we already are, is hardly possible. To delay one or the other of these, is to exasperate on the one hand, or to give confidence on the other, and will add to their numbers; for, like snow-balls, such bodies increase by every movement, unless there is something in the way to obstruct and crumble them before the weight is too great and irresistible.

These are my sentiments. Precedents are dangerous things. Let the reins of government then be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon whilst it has an existence. * * *

TO JAMES MADISON

MOUNT VERNON, 5 November, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I thank you for the communications in your letter of the 1st instant. The decision of the House on the question respecting a paper emission is portentous, I hope, of an auspicious session. It certainly may be classed with the important questions of the present day, and merited the serious attention of the Assembly. Fain would I hope, that the great and most important of all subjects, the *federal government,* may be considered with that calm and deliberate attention, which the magnitude of it so critically and loudly calls for at this critical

moment. Let prejudices, unreasonable jealousies, and local interests, yield to reason and liberality. Let us look to our national character, and to things beyond the present moment. No morn ever dawned more favorably than ours did; and no day was ever more clouded than the present. Wisdom and good examples are necessary at this time to rescue the political machine from the impending storm. Virginia has now an opportunity to set the latter, and has enough of the former, I hope, to take the lead in promoting this great and arduous work. Without an alteration in our political creed, the superstructure we have been seven years in raising, at the expense of so much treasure and blood, must fall. We are fast verging to anarchy and confusion.

By a letter which I have received from General Knox, who had just returned from Massachusetts, whither he had been sent by Congress consequent of the commotions in that State, is replete with melancholy accounts of the temper and designs of a considerable part of that people. Among other things he says:

"Their creed is, that the property of the United States has been protected from the confiscation of Britain by the joint exertions of *all;* and therefore ought to be the *common property of all;* and he that attempts opposition to this creed, is an enemy to equity and justice, and ought to be swept from off the face of the earth." Again: "They are determined to annihilate all debts, public and private, and have agrarian laws, which are easily effected by the means of unfunded paper money, which shall be a tender in all cases whatever." He adds:

"The number of these people amount in Massachusetts to about one fifth part of several populous counties, and to them may be collected people of similar sentiments from the States of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, so as to constitute a body of about twelve or fifteen thousand desperate and unprincipled men. They are chiefly of the young and active part of the community."

How melancholy is the reflection, that in so short a space we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the predictions of our transatlantic foes! "Leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve." [1] Will not the wise

[1] It was a common opinion in Europe both before and for some time after the adoption of the Constitution that the American States could not be permanently united. In England perhaps the wish was father to the thought. The Dean of Gloucester, Josiah Tucker, wrote: "As to the future grandeur of America, and its being a rising empire, under one head, whether republican or monarchical, it is one of the idlest and most visionary notions that ever was conceived even by writers of romance. The mutual antipathies and clashing interests of the Americans, their difference of governments, habitudes, and manners, indicate that they will have no centre of union and no common interest. They never can be united into one compact empire under any species of government whatever; a disunited people till the end of time, suspicious and distrustful of each other, they will be divided and subdivided into little commonwealths or principalities according to natural boundaries, by great bays of the sea, and by vast rivers, lakes and ridges of mountains."—Dean Tucker, *Cui Bono*, cited in Bancroft, *History of the Constitution of the United States*, i., 65. Frederick the Great, who showed a friendly disposition toward the new republic, thought that its form of government would prove fatal to it. He remarked to the British minister in 1782: "The great extent of country would alone be a sufficient obstacle, since a republican government had never been known to exist for any length of time where the territory was not limited and concentrated. It would not be more absurd to propose the estab-

and good strive hard to avert this evil? Or will their supineness suffer ignorance, and the arts of self-interested, designing, disaffected, and desperate characters, to involve this great country in wretchedness and contempt? What stronger evidence can be given of the want of energy in our government, than these disorders? If there is not power in it to check them, what security has a man for life, liberty, or property? To you I am sure I need not add aught on this subject. The consequences of a lax or inefficient government are too obvious to be dwelt upon. Thirteen sovereignties pulling against each other, and all tugging at the federal head, will soon bring ruin on the whole; whereas a liberal and energetic constitution, well guarded and closely watched to prevent encroachments, might restore us to that degree of respectability and consequences, to which we had a fair claim and the brightest prospect of attaining. With sentiments of very great esteem and regard.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

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lishment of a democracy to govern the whole country from Brest to Riga."—*Ibid.*, i., 71. But prophets of evil have not been lacking since. In 1818, thirty years after the adoption of the Constitution, Sydney Smith, a British essayist, said in *The Edinburgh Review:* "The Americans are a very sensible, reflecting people, and have conducted their affairs extremely well; but it is scarcely possible to conceive that such an empire should very long remain undivided, or that the dwellers on the Columbia should have common interest with the navigators of the Hudson and the Delaware."

TO HENRY KNOX

MOUNT VERNON, 26 December 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * I feel, my dear General Knox, infinitely more than I can express to you, for the disorders, which have arisen in these States. Good God! Who, besides a Tory, could have foreseen, or a Briton predicted them? Were these people wiser than others, or did they judge of us from the corruption and depravity of their own hearts? The latter I am persuaded was the case and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America we are very little if anything behind them in dispositions to every thing that is bad.

I do assure you, that even at this moment, when I reflect upon the present prospect of our affairs, it seems to me to be like the vision of a dream. My mind can scarcely realize it as a thing in actual existence; so strange, so wonderful does it appear to me. In this, as in most other matters, we are too slow. When this spirit first dawned, probably it might have been easily checked; but it is scarcely within the reach of human ken, at this moment, to say when, where, or how it will terminate. There are combustibles in every State, which a spark might set fire to. In this a perfect calm prevails at present; and a prompt disposition to support and give energy to the federal system is discovered, if the unlucky stirring of the dispute respecting the navigation of the Mississippi does

not become a leaven that will ferment and sour the mind of it.

The resolutions of the present session respecting a paper emission, military certificates, &c., have stamped justice and liberality on the proceedings of the Assembly. By a late act, it seems very desirous of a general convention to revise and amend the federal constitution. *Apropos;* what prevented the eastern States from attending the September meeting at Annapolis?[1] Of all the States in the Union it should have seemed to me, that a measure of this sort, (distracted as they were with internal commotions and experiencing the want of energy in the government,) would have been most pleasing to them. What are the prevailing sentiments of the one now proposed to be held in Philadelphia in May next? and how will it be attended? You are at the fountain of intelligence, where the wisdom of the nation, it is to be presumed, is concentred; consequently better able, (as I have had sufficient experience of your intelligence, confidence, and candor,) to solve these questions.

The Maryland Assembly has been violently agitated by the question for a paper emission. It has been carried in the House of Delegates; but what has been or may be the fate of the bill in the Senate, I have not yet heard. The partisans in favor of the measure in the lower House threaten, *it is said,* a secession, if it is rejected by that branch of

[1] At the Annapolis Convention in September, 1786, the only States represented were New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia.

the legislature. Thus are we advancing. In regretting, which I have often done with the keenest sorrow, the death of our much lamented friend General Greene, I have accompanied it of late with a query, whether he would not have preferred such an exit to the scenes, which, it is more than probable, many of his compatriots may live to bemoan.

In both your letters you intimate, that the men of reflection, principle, and property in New England, feeling the inefficacy of their present government, are contemplating a change; but you are not explicit with respect to its nature. It has been supposed, that the constitution of the State of Massachusetts was amongst the most energetic in the Union. May not these disorders then be ascribed to an indulgent exercise of the powers of administration? If your laws authorized, and your powers are equal to the suppression of these tumults in the first instance, delay and unnecessary expedients were improper. These are rarely well applied; and the same causes would produce similar effects in any form of government, if the powers of it are not exercised. I ask this question for information. I know nothing of the facts.

That Great Britain will be an unconcerned spectator of the present insurrections, if they continue, is not to be expected. That she is at this moment sowing the seeds of jealousy and discontent among the various tribes of Indians on our frontiers, admits of no doubt in my mind; and that she will improve every opportunity to foment the spirit of turbulence within the bowels of the United

States, with a view of distracting our governments and promoting divisions, is with me not less certain. Her first manœuvres in this will no doubt be covert, and may remain so till the period shall arrive when a decided line of conduct may avail her. Charges of violating the treaty, and other pretexts, will then not be wanting to color overt acts, tending to effect the great objects of which she has long been in labor. A man is now at the head of their American affairs, well calculated to conduct measures of this kind, and more than probably was selected for the purpose. We ought not therefore to sleep nor to slumber. Vigilance in watching and vigor in acting is become in my opinion indispensably necessary. If the powers are inadequate, amend or alter them; but do not let us sink into the lowest state of humiliation and contempt, and become a by-word in all the earth. I think with you, that the spring will unfold important and distressing scenes, unless much wisdom and good management is displayed in the interim. Adieu. Be assured no man has a higher esteem and regard for you, than I have; none more sincerely your friend.[1] * * *

[1] "I have lately had an opportunity of conversing with several of the first characters from the neighboring States. These gentlemen—viz., Messrs. Duane, Chancellor Livingston, Egbert Benson, Judges Yates, Haring, and Smith, from New York, with Messrs. Lowell, King, Parsons, and Judge Sullivan, from Boston—were commissioners for settling the boundaries between the two States. They seemed to be all of opinion that something must be done, but what that something was appeared to baffle their deepest penetration. It is, however, worthy of remark that Mr. King, Mr. Sedgwick, and several others

TO JOHN JAY

MOUNT VERNON, 10 March, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

* * * How far the revision of the federal system, and giving more adequate powers to Congress may be productive of an efficient government, I will not under my present view of the matter, pretend to decide.—That many inconveniences result from the present form, none can deny. Those enumerated in your letter are so obvious and sensibly felt that no logic can controvert, nor is it likely that any change of conduct will remove them, and that attempts to alter or amend it will be like the proppings of a house which is ready to fall, and which no shoars can support (as many seem to think) may also be true. But, is the public mind matured for such an important change as the one you have suggested? What would be the consequences of a premature attempt? My opinion is, that this Country must yet feel and see more, before it can be accomplished.

A thirst for power, and the bantling, I had liked to have said monster for sovereignty, which have

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(I believe I might say John Jay), who have been mortally opposed to the Cincinnati, now look with considerable confidence to that quarter for our political preservation.

"Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Barlow, and myself have written a good number of pieces in prose and verse on political subjects; we have the satisfaction to find that they are reprinted in more papers and read with more avidity than any other performances. Pointed ridicule is found to be of more efficacy than serious argumentation."—*David Humphreys to Washington*, New Haven, 20 January, 1787.

taken such fast hold of the States individually, will when joined by the many whose personal consequence in the control of State politics will in a manner be annihilated, form a strong phalanx against it; and when to these the few who can hold posts of honor or profit in the national government, are compared with the many who will see but little prospect of being noticed, and the discontent of others who may look for appointments, the opposition will be altogether irresistable till the mass, as well as the more discerning part of the Community shall see the necessity. Among men of reflection, few will be found I believe, who are not beginning to think that our system is more perfect in theory than in practice; and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America it is more than probable we shall exhibit the last melancholy proof, that mankind are not competent to their own government without the means of coercion in the sovereign.

Yet I would fain try what the wisdom of the proposed convention will suggest: and what can be effected by their councils. It may be the last peaceable mode of essaying the practicability of the present form, without a greater lapse of time than the exigency of our affairs will allow. In strict propriety a convention so holden may not be legal. Congress, however, may give it a coloring by recommendation, which would fit it more to the taste without proceeding to a definition of the powers. This, however constitutionally it might be done, would not, in my opinion, be expedient:

for delicacy on the one hand, and jealousy on the other, would produce a mere nihil.

My name is in the delegation to this Convention; but it was put there contrary to my desire, and remains contrary to my request. Several reasons at the time of this appointment and which yet exist, conspired to make an attendance inconvenient, perhaps improper, tho' a good deal urged to it. With sentiments of great regard and friendship, &c.[1] * * *

TO DAVID STUART

PHILADELPHIA, 1 July, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

* * * Rhode Island, from our last accts. still perseveres in that impolitic, unjust, and one might add without much impropriety scandalous conduct, which seems to have marked all her public Councils of late. Consequently, no Representa-

[1] When Washington laid down his military command, he believed that he had taken a final leave of all public employment. Hence when urged to represent Virginia in the Federal Convention, he felt that his acceptance would expose him to the charge of inconsistency. He was further embarrassed by the fact that he had given notice that he would be unable to attend the triennial meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati, of which he was president, and which was to meet in Philadelphia at the time appointed for the Federal Convention. Should he attend the Convention, after having declined to attend the meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati, he feared that he would give offence to his old comrades in arms. It was only his intense desire to see some decisive steps taken for the improvement of the government that finally induced him to consent to attend the Convention. He set out from Mount Vernon on May 9th, and arrived in Philadelphia on May 13th, on which day he records

tion is yet here from thence. New Hampshire, tho' Delegates have been appointed, is also unrepresented. Various causes have been assigned, whether well, or ill-founded I shall not take upon me to decide. The fact, however, is that they are not here. Political contests, and want of money, are amidst the reasons assigned for the non-attendance of the members.

As the rules of the convention prevent me from relating any of the proceedings of it, and the gazettes contain, more fully than I could detail, other occurrences of a public nature, I have little to communicate to you on the article of news. Happy indeed would it be, if the convention shall be able to recommend such a firm and permanent government for this Union, that all who live under it may be secure in their lives, liberty, and property; and thrice happy would it be, if such a recommendation should obtain. Every body wishes, every body expects something from the convention; but what will be the final result of its deliberation, the book of fate must disclose.[1] Persuaded I am, that

in his diary: "Waited on the President [of Pennsylvania], Doctr. Franklin, as soon as I got to town. On my arrival the Bells were chimed." On May 25th he writes: "Another Delegate coming in from the State of New Jersey, gave it a representation, and encreased the number to Seven, which forming a quoram of the 13, the members present resolved to organize the body; when by a unanimous vote I was called up to the chair as President of the body."

[1] "The business of this convention is as yet too much in embryo to form any opinion of the conclusion. Much is expected from it by some; not much by others; and nothing by a few. That something is necessary, none will deny; for the situation of the general government, if it can be called a government,

the primary cause of all our disorders lies in the different State governments, and in the tenacity of that power, which pervades the whole of their systems. Whilst independent sovereignty is so ardently contended for, whilst the local views of each State, and separate interests, by which they are too much governed, will not yield to a more enlarged scale of politics, incompatibility in the laws of different States, and disrespect to those of the general government, must render the situation of this great country weak, inefficient, and disgraceful. It has already done so, almost to the final dissolution of it. Weak at home and disregarded abroad is our present condition, and contemptible enough it is.

Entirely unnecessary was it to offer any apology for the sentiments you were so obliging as to offer me. I have had no wish more ardent, through the whole progress of this business, than that of knowing what kind of government is best calculated for us to live under. No doubt there will be a diversity of sentiments on this important subject; and, to inform the judgment, it is necessary to hear all arguments that can be advanced. To please all is impossible, and to attempt it would be vain. The only way, therefore, is, under all the views in which it can be placed, and with a due consideration to circumstances, habits, &c., &c., to form such a gov-

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is shaken to its foundation, and liable to be overturned by every blast. In a word, it is at an end; and, unless a remedy is soon applied, anarchy and confusion will inevitably ensue."—*Washington to Jefferson*, 30 May, 1787.

ernment as will bear the scrutinizing eye of criticism, and trust it to the good sense and patriotism of the people to carry it into effect. Demagogues, men who are unwilling to lose any of their State consequence, and interested characters in each, will oppose any general government. But let these be regarded rightly, and justice, it is to be hoped, will at length prevail. My best wishes attend Mrs. Stuart, yourself, and the girls. If I can render any service whilst I remain here, I shall be happy in doing it. I am, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON

PHILADELPHIA, 10 July, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your communication of the 3d. When I refer you to the state of the counsels, which prevailed at the period you left this city, and add that they are now if possible in a worse train than ever, you will find but little ground on which the hope of a good establishment can be formed. In a word, I almost despair of seeing a favorable issue to the proceedings of our convention, and do therefore repent having had any agency in the business.

The men, who oppose a strong and energetic government, are in my opinion narrow-minded politicians, or are under the influence of local views. The apprehension expressed by them, that the *people* will not accede to the form proposed, is the *ostensible,* not the *real* cause of opposition. But, admitting that the present sentiment is as they

prognosticate, the proper question ought nevertheless to be, Is it, or is it not, the best form that such a country as this can adopt? If it be the best, recommend it, and it will assuredly obtain, maugre opposition. I am sorry you went away. I wish you were back. The crisis is equally important and alarming, and no opposition, under such circumstances, should discourage exertions till the signature is offered. I will not at this time trouble you with more than my best wishes and sincere regard.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO PATRICK HENRY

MOUNT VERNON, 24 September, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

In the first moment after my return, I take the liberty of sending you a copy of the constitution, which the federal convention has submitted to the people of these States. I accompany it with no observations. Your own judgment will at once discover the good and the exceptionable parts of it; and your experience of the difficulties, which have ever arisen when attempts have been made to reconcile such variety of interests and local prejudices, as pervade the several States, will render explanation unnecessary. I wish the constitution, which is offered, had been made more perfect; but I sincerely believe it is the best that could be obtained at this time. And, as a constitutional door is opened for amendment hereafter, the adoption

of it, under the present circumstances of the Union, is in my opinion desirable.

From a variety of concurring accounts it appears to me, that the political concerns of this country are in a manner suspended by a thread, and that the convention has been looked up to, by the reflecting part of the community, with a solicitude which is hardly to be conceived; and, if nothing had been agreed on by that body, anarchy would soon have ensued, the seeds being deeply sown in every soil. I am, &c.[1]

TO HENRY KNOX

MOUNT VERNON, October, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * The constitution is now before the judgment-seat. It has, as was expected, its adversaries and supporters. Which will preponderate is yet to be decided. The former more than probably will be most active, as the major part of them will,

[1] "The Constitution that is submitted, is not free from imperfections, but there are as few radical defects in it as could well be expected, considering the heterogeneous mass of which the Convention was composed and the diversity of interests that are to be attended to. As a constitutional door is opened for future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them and I wish it may be by as great a majority of them as it was by that of the Convention; but this is hardly to be expected because the importance and sinister views of too many characters, will be affected by the change.—Much will depend however upon literary abilities, and the recommendation of it by good pens should be *openly*, I mean, publickly afforded in the Gazettes.—Go matters however as they may, I shall have the consolation

it is to be feared, be governed by sinister and self-important motives, to which every thing in their breasts must yield. The opposition from another class of them may perhaps, (if they should be men of reflection, candor, and information,) subside in the solution of the following simple questions. 1. Is the constitution, which is submitted by the convention, preferable to the government, (if it can be called one,) under which we now live? 2. Is it probable that more confidence would at the time be placed in another convention, provided the experiment should be tried, than was placed in the last one, and is it likely that a better agreement would take place therein? What would be the consequences if these should not happen, or even from the delay, which must inevitably follow such an experiment? Is there not a constitutional door open for alterations or amendments? and is it not likely that real defects will be as readily discovered after as before trial? and will not our successors be as ready to apply the remedy as ourselves, if occasion should require it? To think otherwise will, in my judgment, be ascribing more of the *amor patriæ,* more wisdom and more virtue to ourselves, than I think we deserve.

It is highly probable, that the refusal of our Governor [Edmund Randolph] and Colonel

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to reflect that no objects but the public good—and that peace and harmony which I wished to see prevail in the Convention, obtruded even for a moment in my bosom during the whole Session long as it was."—*Washington to Colonel David Humphreys,* 10 October, 1787.

Mason to subscribe to the proceedings of the convention will have a bad effect in this State; for, as you well observe, they *must* not only assign reasons for the justification of their own conduct, but it is highly probable that these reasons will be clothed in most terrific array for the purpose of alarming. Some things are already addressed to the fears of the people, and will no doubt have their effect. As far, however, as the sense of this part of the country has been taken, it is strongly in favor of the proposed constitution. Further I cannot speak with precision. If a powerful opposition is given to it, the weight thereof will, I apprehend, come from the south side of the James River, and from the western counties. I am, &c.

TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON

MOUNT VERNON, 10 November, 1787.

DEAR BUSHROD,

* * * That the Assembly would afford the people an opportunity of deciding on the proposed constitution, I had scarcely a doubt. The only question with me was, whether it would go forth under favorable auspices, or receive the stamp of disapprobation. The opponents I expected (for it ever has been, that the adversaries to a measure are more active than its friends,) would endeavor to stamp it with unfavorable impressions, in order to bias the judgment, that is ultimately to decide on it. This is evidently the case with the writers in opposition, whose objections are better calculated

to alarm the fears, than to convince the judgment, of their readers. They build their objections upon principles, that do not exist, which the constitution does not support them in, and the existence of which has been, by an appeal to the constitution itself, flatly denied; and then, as if they were unanswerable, draw all the dreadful consequences that are necessary to alarm the apprehensions of the ignorant or unthinking. It is not the interest of the major part of those characters to be convinced; nor will their local views yield to arguments, which do not accord with their present or future prospects.

A candid solution of a single question, to which the plainest understanding is competent, does, in my opinion, decide the dispute; namely, Is it best for the States to unite or not to unite? If there are men, who prefer the latter, then unquestionably the constitution which is offered must, in their estimation, be wrong from the words, "*We the people,*" to the signature, inclusively, but those, who think differently, and yet object to parts of it, would do well to consider, that it does not lie with any *one* State, or the *minority* of the States, to superstruct a constitution for the whole. The separate interests, as far as it is practicable, must be consolidated; and local views must be attended to, as far as the nature of the case will admit. Hence it is, that every State has some objection to the present form, and these objections are directed to different points. That which is most pleasing to one is obnoxious to another, and so *vice versâ*. If

then the union of the whole is a desirable object, the component parts must yield a little in order to accomplish it. Without the latter, the former is unattainable; for again I repeat it, that not a single State, nor the minority of the States, can force a constitution on the majority. But, admitting the power, it will surely be granted that it cannot be done without involving scenes of civil commotion, of a very serious nature.

Let the opponents of the proposed constitution in this State be asked, and it is a question they certainly ought to have asked themselves, what line of conduct they would advise to adopt, if nine other States, of which I think there is little doubt, should accede to the constitution. Would they recommend, that it should stand single? Will they connect it with Rhode Island? Or even with two others checker-wise, and remain with them, as outcasts from the society, to shift for themselves? Or will they return to their dependence on Great Britain? Or, lastly, have the mortification to come in when they will be allowed no credit for doing so? [1]

The warmest friends and the best supporters the constitution has, do not contend that it is free from imperfections; but they found them unavoidable, and are sensible, if evil is likely to arise therefrom, the remedy must come hereafter; for in the present

[1] North Carolina and Rhode Island were the only States that failed to ratify the Constitution before the new government went into operation. North Carolina ratified November 21, 1789, and Rhode Island on May 29, 1790.

moment it is not to be obtained; and, as there is a constitutional door open for it, I think the people (for it is with them to judge), can, as they will have the advantage of experience on their side, decide with as much propriety on the alterations and amendments which are necessary, as ourselves. I do not think we are more inspired, have more wisdom, or possess more virtue, than those who will come after us.

The power under the constitution will always be in the people. It is intrusted for certain defined purposes, and for a certain limited period, to representatives of their own choosing; and, whenever it is executed contrary to their interest, or not agreeable to their wishes, their servants can and undoubtedly will be recalled. It is agreed on all hands, that no government can be well administered without powers; yet, the instant these are delegated, although those, who are intrusted with the administration, are no more than the creatures of the people, act as it were but for a day, and are amenable for every false step they take, they are, from the moment they receive it, set down as tyrants; their natures, they would conceive from this, immediately changed, and that they can have no other disposition but to oppress. Of these things, in a government constituted and guarded as *ours* is, I have no idea; and do firmly believe, that, whilst many *ostensible* reasons are assigned to prevent the adoption of it, the real ones are concealed behind the curtains, because they are not of a nature to appear in open day. I believe further,

supposing them pure, that as great evils result from too great jealousy as from the want of it. We need look, I think, no further for proof of this, than to the constitution of some, if not all, of these States. No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints and wholesome checks in every department of government, than I am; but I have never yet been able to discover the propriety of placing it absolutely out of the power of men to render essential services, because a possibility remains of their doing ill. * * *

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

MOUNT VERNON, 8 January, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

* * * The diversity of sentiments upon the important matter, which has been submitted to the people, was as much expected as it is regretted by me.[1] The various passions and *motives,* by which men are influenced, are concomitants of fallibility, engrafted into our nature for the purposes of unerring wisdom; but, had I entertained a latent hope, (at the time you moved to have the constitution submitted to a second convention,) that a more perfect form would be agreed to, in a word, that any constitution would be adopted under the impressions and instructions of the members, the publications, which have taken place since, would

[1] This letter is a reply to one from Randolph, which had been accompanied by his pamphlet containing his objections to the adoption of the Constitution.

have eradicated every form of it. How do the sentiments of the influential characters in this State, who are opposed to the constitution, and have favored the public with their opinions, quadrate with each other? Are they not at variance on some of the most important points? If the opponents in the *same* State cannot agree in their principles, what prospect is there of a coalescence with the advocates of the measure, when the different views and jarring interests of so wide and extended an empire are to be brought forward and combated?

To my judgment it is more clear than ever, that an attempt to amend the constitution, which is submitted, would be productive of more heat and greater confusion than can well be conceived. There are some things in the new form, I will readily acknowledge, which never did, and I am persuaded never will, obtain my cordial approbation; but I then did conceive, and do now most firmly believe, that in the aggregate it is the best constitution, that can be obtained at this epoch, and that this, or a dissolution of the Union, awaits our choice, and are the only alternatives before us. Thus believing, I had not, nor have I now, any hesitation in deciding on which to lean.

I pray your forgiveness for the expression of these sentiments. In acknowledging the receipt of your letter on this subject, it was hardly to be avoided, although I am well-disposed to let the matter rest entirely on its own merits, and men's minds to their own workings. With very great esteem and regard I am, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 7 February, 1788.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

You know it always gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear from you, and therefore I need only say, that your two kind letters of the 9th and 15th of October, so replete with personal affection and confidential intelligence, afforded me inexpressible satisfaction. * * *

You appear to be, as might be expected from a real friend to this country, anxiously concerned about its present political situation. So far as I am able, I shall be happy in gratifying that friendly solicitude. As to my sentiments with respect to the merits of the new constitution, I will disclose them without reserve, (although by passing through the post-office they should become known to all the world,) for in truth I have nothing to conceal on that subject. It appears to me, then, little short of a miracle, that the delegates from so many different States (which States you know are also different from each other), in their manners, circumstances, and prejudices, should unite in forming a system of national government, so little liable to well-founded objections. Nor am I yet such an enthusiastic, partial, or undiscriminating admirer of it, as not to perceive it is tinctured with some real (though not radical) defects. The limits of a letter would not suffer me to go fully into an examination of them; nor would the discussion be entertaining or profitable. I therefore

forbear to touch upon it. With regard to the two great points, (the pivots upon which the whole machine must move,) my creed is simply,

1st. That the general government is not invested with more powers, than are indispensably necessary to perform the functions of a good government; and consequently, that no objection ought to be made against the quantity of power delegated to it.

2ly. That these powers, (as the appointment of all rulers will for ever arise from, and at short, stated intervals recur to, the free suffrage of the people,) are so distributed among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, into which the general government is arranged, that it can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form, so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the people.

I would not be understood, my dear Marquis, to speak of consequences, which may be produced in the revolution of ages, by corruption of morals, profligacy of manners, and listlessness for the preservation of the natural and unalienable rights of mankind, nor of the successful usurpations, that may be established at such an unpropitious juncture upon the ruins of liberty, however providently guarded and secured; as these are contingencies against which no human prudence can effectually provide. It will at least be a recommendation to the proposed constitution, that it is provided with more checks and barriers against the introduction

of tyranny, and those of a nature less liable to be surmounted, than any government hitherto instituted among mortals hath possessed. We are not to expect perfection in this world; but mankind, in modern times, have apparently made some progress in the science of government. Should that, which is now offered to the people of America, be found on experiment less perfect than it can be made, a constitutional door is left open for its amelioration.

Some respectable characters have wished, that the States, after having pointed out whatever alterations and amendments may be judged necessary, would appoint another federal convention to modify it upon those documents. For myself, I have wondered, that sensible men should not see the impracticability of this scheme. The members would go fortified with such instructions, that nothing but discordant ideas could prevail. Had I but slightly suspected, at the time when the late convention was in session, that another convention would not be likely to agree upon a better form of government, I should now be confirmed in the fixed belief that they would not be able to agree upon any system whatever; so many, I may add, such contradictory and in my opinion unfounded objections have been urged against the system in contemplation, many of which would operate equally against every efficient government, that might be proposed. I will only add, as a further opinion founded on the maturest deliberation, that there is no alternative, no hope of alteration, no

intermediate resting-place, between the adoption of this, and a recurrence to an unqualified state of anarchy, with all its deplorable consequences. * * *

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 28 April, 1788.

* * * I notice with pleasure the additional immunities and facilities in trade, which France has granted by the late royal *arret* to the United States. I flatter myself it will have the desired effect in some measure of augmenting the commercial intercourse. From the productions and wants of the two countries, their trade with each other is certainly capable of [too?] great amelioration to be actuated by a spirit of unwise policy. For so surely as ever we shall have an efficient government established, so surely will that government impose retaliating restrictions, to a certain degree, upon the trade of Britain. At present, or under our existing form of confederation, it would be idle to think of making commercial regulations on our part. One State passes a prohibitory law respecting some article, another State opens wide the avenue for its admission. One Assembly makes a system, another Assembly unmakes it. Virginia, in the very last session of her legislature, was about to have passed some of the most extravagant and preposterous edicts on the subject of trade, that ever stained the leaves of a legislative code. It is in vain to hope for a remedy of these, and innumerable

other evils, until a general government shall be adopted.

The conventions of six States only have as yet accepted the new constitution. No one has rejected it. It is believed that the convention of Maryland, which is now in session, and that of South Carolina, which is to assemble on the 12th of May, will certainly adopt it.[1] It is also since the elections of members of the convention have taken place in this State, more generally believed, that it will be adopted here, than it was before those elections were made. There will, however, be powerful and eloquent speeches on both sides of the question in the Virginia convention; but as Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Madison, Jones, Nicholas,

[1] "Since I had the pleasure of writing to you by the last Packet, the Convention of Maryland has ratified the federal Constitution by a majority of 63 to 11 voices. That makes the seventh State which has adopted it. Next Monday the Convention in Virginia will assemble—we have still good hopes of its adoption here, though by no great plurality of votes. South Carolina has probably decided favorably before this time. The plot thickens fast. A few short weeks will determine the political fate of America for the present generation, and probably produce no small influence on the happiness of society through a long succession of ages to come. Should every thing proceed with harmony and consent according to our actual wishes and expectations, I will confess to you sincerely, my dear Marquis, it will be so much beyond any thing we had a right to imagine or expect eighteen months ago, that it will demonstrate as visibly the finger of Providence, as any possible event in the course of human affairs can ever designate it. It is impracticable for you or any one who has not been on the spot, to realise the change in men's minds and the progress towards rectitude in thinking and acting which will then have been made."—*Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette*, 28 May, 1788.

Innes, and many other of our first characters, will be advocates for its adoption, you may suppose the weight of abilities will rest on that side. Henry and Mason are its great adversaries. The governor, if he approves it at all, will do it feebly.

On the general merits of this proposed constitution, I wrote to you some time ago my sentiments pretty freely. That letter had not been received by you, when you addressed to me the last of yours, which has come to my hands. I had never supposed that perfection could be the result of accommodation and mutual concession. The opinion of Mr. Jefferson and yourself is certainly a wise one, that the constitution ought by all means to be accepted by nine States before any attempt should be made to procure amendments; for, if that acceptance shall not previously take place, men's minds will be so much agitated and soured, that the danger will be greater than ever of our becoming a disunited people. Whereas, on the other hand, with prudence in temper and a spirit of moderation, every essential alteration may in the process of time be expected.

You will doubtless have seen, that it was owing to this conciliatory and patriotic principle, that the convention of Massachusetts adopted the constitution *in toto,* but recommended a number of specific alterations, and quieting explanations as an early, serious, and unremitting subject of attention. Now, although it is not to be expected, that every individual in society will or can be brought to agree upon what is exactly the best form of government,

yet there are many things in the constitution, which only need to be explained, in order to prove equally satisfactory to all parties. For example, there was not a member of the convention, I believe, who had the least objection to what is contended for by the advocates for a *Bill of Rights* and *Trial by Jury*. The first, where the people evidently retained every thing, which they did not in the express terms give up, was considered nugatory, as you will find to have been more fully explained by Mr. Wilson and others; and, as to the second, it was only the difficulty of establishing a mode, which should not interfere with the fixed modes of any of the States, that induced the convention to leave it as a matter of future adjustment.

There are other points in which opinions would be more likely to vary. As for instance, on the ineligibility of the same person for president, after he should have served a certain course of years. Guarded so effectually as the proposed constitution is, in respect to the prevention of bribery and undue influence in the choice of president, I confess I differ widely myself from Mr. Jefferson and you, as to the necessity or expediency of rotation in that appointment. The matter was fairly discussed in the convention, and to my full conviction, though I cannot have time or room to sum up the argument in this letter. There cannot in my judgment be the least danger, that the president will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupted

morals and political depravity; and even then, there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though, when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves, and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes. Under an extended view of this part of the subject, I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man, who on some great emergency shall be deemed universally most capable of serving the public. * * *

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 18 June, 1788.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

* * * I like not much the situation of affairs in France. The bold demands of the parliaments, and the decisive tone of the King, show that but little more irritation would be necessary to blow up the spark of discontent into a flame, that might not easily be quenched. If I were to advise, I should say that great moderation should be used on both sides. Let it not, my dear Marquis, be considered as a derogation from the good opinion, that I entertain of your prudence, when I caution you, as an individual desirous of signalizing yourself in the cause of your country and freedom, against running into extremes and prejudicing your cause. The King, though, I think from every thing I have been able to learn, he is really a good-hearted though a warm-spirited man, if thwarted injudici-

ously in the execution of prerogatives that belonged to the crown, and in plans which he conceives calculated to promote the national good, may disclose qualities he has been little thought to possess. On the other hand, such a spirit seems to be awakened in the kingdom, as, if managed with extreme prudence, may produce a gradual and tacit revolution much in favor of the subjects, by abolishing *lettres de cachet,* and defining more accurately the powers of government. It is a wonder to me, there should be found a single monarch, who does not realize that his own glory and felicity must depend on the prosperity and happiness of his people. How easy is it for a sovereign to do that, which shall not only immortalize his name, but attract the blessings of millions.

In a letter I wrote you a few days ago by Mr. Barlow, but which might not possibly have reached New York until after his departure, I mentioned the accession of Maryland to the proposed government, and gave you the state of politics to that period. Since which the convention of South Carolina has ratified the constitution by a great majority. That of this State has been sitting almost three weeks; and, so nicely does it appear to be balanced, that each side asserts that it has a preponderancy of votes in its favor. It is probable, therefore, the majority will be small, let it fall on whichever part it may. I am inclined to believe it will be in favor of the adoption. The conventions of New York and New Hampshire both assemble this week. A large proportion of members, with

the governor at their head, in the former, are said to be opposed to the government in contemplation. New Hampshire, it is thought, will adopt it without much hesitation or delay. It is a little strange, that the men of large property in the south should be more afraid that the constitution will produce an aristocracy or a monarchy, than the genuine democratical people of the east. Such are our actual prospects. The accession of one State more will complete the number, which, by the constitutional provision, will be sufficient in the first instance to carry the government into effect.

And then, I expect, that many blessings will be attributed to our new government, which are now taking their rise from that industry and frugality, into the practice of which the people have been forced from necessity. I really believe, that there never was so much labor and economy to be found before in the country as at the present moment. If they persist in the habits they are acquiring, the good effects will soon be distinguishable. When the people shall find themselves secure under an energetic government, when foreign nations shall be disposed to give us equal advantages in commerce from dread of retaliation, when the burdens of war shall be in a manner done away by the sale of western lands, when the seeds of happiness which are sown here shall begin to expand themselves, and when every one, (under his own vine and fig-tree,) shall begin to taste the fruits of freedom, then all these blessings (for all these blessings will come) will be referred to the fostering in-

fluence of the new government. Whereas many causes will have conspired to produce them. You see I am not less enthusiastic than I ever have been, if a belief that peculiar scenes of felicity are reserved for this country is to be denominated enthusiasm. Indeed, I do not believe, that Providence has done so much for nothing. It has always been my creed, that we should not be left as an awful monument to prove, "that mankind, under the most favorable circumstances for civil liberty and happiness, are unequal to the task of governing themselves, and therefore made for a master."

We have had a backward spring and summer, with more rain and cloudy weather than almost ever has been known; still the appearance of crops in some parts of the country is favorable, as we may generally expect will be the case, from the difference of soil and variety of climate in so extensive a region; insomuch that I hope, some day or another, we shall become a storehouse and granary for the world. In addition to our former channels of trade, salted provisions, butter, and cheese are exported with profit from the eastern States to the East Indies. In consequence of a contract, large quantities of flour are lately sent from Baltimore for supplying the garrison of Gibraltar. I am, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

MOUNT VERNON, 31 August, 1788.

SIR,

* * * The merits and defects of the proposed

constitution have been largely and ably discussed. For myself, I was ready to have embraced any tolerable compromise, that was competent to save us from impending ruin; and I can say there are scarcely any of the amendments, which have been suggested, to which I have much objection, except that which goes to the prevention of direct taxation. And that, I presume, will be more strenuously advocated and insitsed upon hereafter, than any other. I had indulged the expectation, that the new government would enable those entrusted with its administration to do justice to the public creditors, and retrieve the national character. But, if no means are to be employed but requisitions, that expectation was vain, and we may as well recur to the old confederation. If the system can be put in operation, without touching much the pockets of the people, perhaps it may be done; but, in my judgment, infinite circumspection and pruence are yet necessary in the experiment. It is nearly impossible for anybody who has not been on the spot, (from any description) to conceive what the delicacy and danger of our situation have been. Though the peril is not past entirely, thank God the prospect is somewhat brightening.

You will probably have heard, before the receipt of this letter, that the general government has been adopted by eleven States, and that the actual Congress have been prevented from issuing their ordinance for carrying it into execution, in consequence of a dispute about the place at which the future

Congress shall meet. It is probable, that Philadelphia or New York will soon be agreed upon.

I will just touch on the bright side of our national state, before I conclude; and we may perhaps rejoice, that the people have been ripened by misfortune for the reception of a good government. They are emerging from the gulf of dissipation and debt, into which they had precipitated themselves at the close of the war. Economy and industry are evidently gaining ground. Not only agriculture, but even manufactures, are much more attended to than formerly. Notwithstanding the shackles under which our trade in general labors, commerce to the East Indies is prosecuted with considerable success. Salted provisions and other produce, (particularly from Massachusetts,) have found an advantageous market there. The voyages are so much shorter, and the vessels are navigated at so much less expense, that we may hope to rival and supply, (at least through the West Indies,) some part of Europe with commodities from thence. This year the exports from Massachusetts have amounted to a great deal more than their imports. I wish this was the case everywhere. * * *

IV

Starting the New Government

We rejoice, and with us all America, that in obedience to the call of our common country you have returned once more to public life. In you all parties confide; in you all interests unite; and we have no doubt that your past services, great as they have been, will be equalled by your future exertions, and that your prudence and sagacity as a statesman will tend to avert the dangers to which we were exposed, to give stability to the present Government and dignity and splendor to that country which your skill and valor as a soldier so eminently contributed to raise to independence and empire.

REPLY OF THE SENATE TO WASHINGTON'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

IV

Starting the New Government

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON

MOUNT VERNON, 3 October, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

In acknowledging the receipt of your candid and kind letter by the last post, little more is incumbent upon me than to thank you sincerely for the frankness with which you communicated your sentiments, and to assure you that the same manly tone of intercourse will always be more than barely welcome; indeed it will be highly acceptable to me. I am particularly glad in the present instance, that you have dealt thus freely and like a friend.[1]

[1] "In answer to the observations you make on the probability of my election to the presidency, knowing me as you do, I need only say, that it has no enticing charms and no fascinating allurements for me. However, it might not be decent for me to say I would refuse to accept, or even to speak much about an appointment which may never take place; for, in so doing, one might possibly incur the application of the moral resulting from that fable, in which the fox is represented as inveighing against the sourness of the grapes, because he could not reach them. All that it will be necessary to add, my dear Marquis, in order to show my decided predilections is, that, (at my time of life and under my circumstances,) the increasing infirmities

Although I could not help observing, from several publications and letters, that my name had been sometimes spoken of, and that it was possible the *contingency* which is the subject of your letter might happen, yet I thought it best to maintain a guarded silence, and to lack the counsel of my best friends, (which I certainly hold in the highest

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of nature and the growing love of retirement do not permit me to entertain a wish beyond that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm. Let those follow the pursuits of ambition and fame, who have a keener relish for them, or who may have more years in store for the enjoyment."—*Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette*, 28 April, 1788.

"I take it for granted, Sir, you have concluded to comply with what will, no doubt, be the general call of your country in relation to the new government. You will permit me to say, that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first operations. It is to little purpose to have introduced a system, if the weightiest influence is not given to its firm establishment in the outset."—*Hamilton to Washington*, 13 August, 1788.

"On the delicate subject with which you conclude your letter [of August 13, 1788], I can say nothing, because the event alluded to may never happen, and because, in case it should occur, it would be a point of prudence to defer forming one's ultimate and irrevocable decision, so long as new data might be afforded for one to act with the greater wisdom and propriety. I would not wish to conceal my prevailing sentiment from you; for you know me well enough, my good Sir, to be persuaded, that I am not guilty of affectation when I tell you, that it is my great and sole desire to live and die in peace and retirement on my own farm. Were it even indispensable, a different line of conduct should be adopted, while you and some others who are acquainted with my heart would acquit, the world and posterity might possibly accuse me [of] inconsistency and ambition. Still I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles), the character of *an honest man*."—*Washington to Hamilton*, 28 August, 1788.

"I should be deeply pained, my dear Sir, if your scruples in regard to a certain station should be matured into a resolu-

estimation,) rather than to hazard an imputation unfriendly to the delicacy of my feelings. For, situated as I am, I could hardly bring the question into the slightest discussion, or ask an opinion even in the most confidential manner, without betraying, in my judgment, some impropriety of conduct, or without feeling an apprehension, that a

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tion to decline it; though I am neither surprised at their existence, nor can I but agree in opinion that the caution you observe in deferring the ultimate determination is prudent. I have, however, reflected maturely on the subject, and have come to a conclusion (in which I feel no hesitation), that every public and personal consideration will demand from you an acquiescence in what will *certainly* be the unanimous wish of your country.

"The absolute retreat, which you meditated at the close of the late war, was natural and proper. Had the government produced by the revolution gone on in a *tolerable* train, it would have been most advisable to have persisted in that retreat. But I am clearly of opinion, that the crisis, which brought you again into public view, left you no alternative but to comply; and I am equally clear in the opinion, that you are by that act *pledged* to take a part in the execution of the government. I am not less convinced, that the impression of the necessity of your filling the station in question is so universal, that you run no risk of any uncandid imputation by submitting to it. But, even if this were not the case, a regard to your own reputation, as well as to the public good, calls upon you in the strongest manner to run that risk.

"It cannot be considered as a compliment to say, that on your acceptance of the office of president, the success of the new government in its commencement may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies, than they have been in recommending it in the first instance to the adoption of the people. Independent of all considerations drawn from this source, the point of light in which you stand at home and abroad will make an infinite difference in the respectability with which the government will begin its operations, in the alternative of your being or not being at the head of it. I

premature display of anxiety might be construed into a vainglorious desire of pushing myself into notice as a candidate. Now, if I am not grossly deceived in myself, I should unfeignedly rejoice in case the electors, by giving their votes in favor of some other person, would save me from the dreaded dilemma of being forced to accept or refuse.

If that may not be, I am in the next place earnestly desirous of searching out the truth, and of

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forbear to mention considerations which might have a more personal application. What I have said will suffice for the inferences I mean to draw.

"First; in a matter so essential to the well-being of society as the prosperity of a newly instituted government, a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success has no option but to lend his services if called for. Permit me to say, it would be inglorious, in such a situation, not to hazard the glory, however great, which he might have previously acquired.

"Secondly; your signature to the proposed system pledges your judgment for its being such an one as upon the whole was worthy of the public approbation. If it should miscarry, (as men commonly decide from success or the want of it) the blame will in all probability be laid on the system itself. And the framers of it will have to encounter the disrepute of having brought about a revolution in government, without substituting any thing that was worthy of the effort; they pulled down one Utopia, it will be said, to build up another. This view of the subject, if I mistake not, my dear Sir, will suggest to your mind greater hazard to that fame, which must be and ought to be dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system, than in affording it. I will only add, that in my estimate of the matter, that aid is indispensable.

"I have taken the liberty to express these sentiments, and to lay before you my view of the subject. I doubt not the considerations mentioned have fully occurred to you, and I trust they will finally produce in your mind the same result which exists in mine. I flatter myself the frankness with which I have delivered myself will not be displeasing to you. It has been prompted by motives which you would not disapprove."—*Hamilton to Washington*, September, 1788.

knowing whether there does not exist a probability that the government would be just as happily and effectually carried into execution without my aid as with it. I am *truly* solicitous to obtain all the previous information, which the circumstances will afford, and to determine (when the determination can with propriety be no longer postponed) according to the principles of right reason, and the dictates of a clear conscience, without too great a reference to the unforeseen consequences, which may affect my person or reputation. Until that period, I may fairly hold myself open to conviction, though I allow your sentiments to have weight in them; and I shall not pass by your arguments without giving them as dispassionate a consideration as I can possibly bestow upon them.

In taking a survey of the subject, in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I will not suppress the acknowledgment, my dear Sir, that I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind, as often as I have been taught to expect I might, and perhaps must, ere long, be called to make a decision. You will, I am well assured, believe the assertion, (though I have little expectation it would gain credit from those who are less acquainted with me,) that, if I should receive the appointment, and if I should be prevailed upon to accept it, the acceptance would be attended with more diffidence and reluctance than I ever experienced before in my life. It would be, however, with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the

public weal, in hopes that at a convenient and early period my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire, to pass an unclouded evening after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquillity.

But why these anticipations? If the friends to the constitution conceive that my administering the government will be a means of its acceleration and strength, is it not probable that the adversaries of it may entertain the same ideas, and of course make it an object of opposition? That many of this description will become electors, I can have no doubt of, any more than that their opposition will extend to any character, who, (from whatever cause,) would be likely to thwart their measures. It might be impolitic in them to make this declaration *previous* to the election; but I shall be out in my conjectures if they do not act conformably thereto, and from the seeming moderation, by which they appear to be actuated at present is neither more nor less than a finesse to lull and deceive. Their plan of opposition is systematized, and a regular intercourse, I have much reason to believe, between the leaders of it in the several States is formed to render it more effectual. With sentiments of sincere regard and esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

[1] These views produced no change in the sentiments of Colonel Hamilton, in regard to the main topic of discussion. "I feel a conviction," said he in reply, "that you will finally see your acceptance to be indispensable. It is no compliment to say, that no other man can sufficiently unite the public opinion, or can give the requisite weight to the office, in the commencement of the government. These considerations appear to

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN

MOUNT VERNON, 26 October, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been lately favored with the receipt of your letters of the 24th and 30th of September, with their enclosures, and thank you sincerely for your free and friendly communications. As the period is now rapidly approaching, which must decide the fate of the new constitution, as to the manner of its being carried into execution, and probably as to its usefulness, it is not wonderful that we should all feel an unusual degree of anxiety on the occasion. I must acknowledge my fears have been greatly alarmed, but still I am not without hopes. From the good beginning, that has been made in Pennsylvania, a State from which much was to be feared, I cannot help foreboding well of the others. That is to say, I flatter myself a majority of them will appoint federal members to

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me of themselves decisive. I am not sure that your refusal would not throw every thing into confusion. I am sure that it would have the worst effect imaginable. Indeed, as I hinted in a former letter, I think circumstances leave no option."

Many of General Washington's correspondents touched upon the same subject; and he was made to understand from all quarters, that he was designated in the minds of the people as the first chief magistrate under the new constitution. In writing from Connecticut, Colonel Jonathan Trumbull said: "In the choice of president we have, I believe, no discordant voice. All minds are agreed, and every heart exults in the pleasing prospect of having their wishes so nobly gratified in this great appointment."—October 28th. And Governor Johnson of Maryland wrote: "We cannot, Sir, do without you, and I and thousands more can explain to anybody but yourself why we cannot do without you."—October 10th.—*Sparks.*

the several branches of the new government. I hardly should think that Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia would be for attempting premature amendments. Some of the rest may also, in all probability, be apprehensive of throwing our affairs into confusion by such ill-timed expedients.

There will, however, be no room for the advocates of the constitution to relax in their exertions; for, if they should be lulled into security, appointments of antifederal men may probably take place, and the consequences, which you so justly dread, be realized. Our Assembly is now in session. It is represented to be rather antifederal, but we have heard nothing of its doings. Mr. Patrick Henry, Mr. R. H. Lee, and Mr. Madison are talked of for the senate.[1] Perhaps as much opposition, or, in other words, as great an effort for early amendments, is to be apprehended from this State as from any but New York. The constant report is, that North Carolina will soon accede to the new Union. A new Assembly is just elected in Maryland, in which it is asserted the number of federalists greatly predominates; and, that being the case, we may look for favorable appointments, in spite of the rancor and activity of a few discontented and, I may say, *apparently* unprincipled men.

[1] Richard Henry Lee and Colonel Grayson, both of whom had opposed the adoption of the Constitution, were Virginia's first senators.

I would willingly pass over in silence that part of your letter in which you mention the persons, who are candidates for the first two offices in the executive, if I did not fear the omission might seem to betray a want of confidence. Motives of delicacy have prevented me hitherto from conversing or writing on this subject, whenever I could avoid it with decency. I may, however, with great sincerity, and I believe without offending against modesty or propriety, say to *you,* that I *most* heartily wish the choice to which you allude may not fall upon me; and that, if it should, I must reserve to myself the right of making up my final decision at the last moment, when it can be brought into one view, and when the expediency or inexpediency of a *refusal* can be more judiciously determined than at present. But be assured, my dear Sir, if from any inducement I shall be persuaded ultimately to accept, it will not be (so far as I know my own heart) from any of a private or personal nature. Every personal consideration conspires to rivet me (if I may use the expression) to retirement. At my time of life, and under my circumstances, nothing in this world can ever draw me from it, unless it be a *conviction* that the partiality of my countrymen had made my services absolutely necessary, joined to a *fear* that my refusal might induce a belief that I preferred the conservation of my own reputation and private ease to the good of my country.[1] After all, if

[1] "Notwithstanding my advanced season of life, my increasing fondness for agricultural amusements, and my growing

I should conceive myself in a manner constrained to accept, I call Heaven to witness, that this very act would be the greatest sacrifice of my personal feelings and wishes, that ever I have been called upon to make. It would be to forego repose and domestic enjoyment, for trouble, perhaps for public obloquy; for I should consider myself as entering upon an unexplored field enveloped on every side with clouds and darkness.

From this embarrassing situation I had naturally supposed that my declarations at the close of the war would have saved me; and that my sincere intentions, then publicly made known, would have effectually precluded me for ever afterwards from being looked upon as a candidate for any office. This hope, as a last anchor of worldly happiness in old age, I had still carefully preserved; until the public papers, and private letters from my correspondents in almost every quarter, taught me to

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love of retirement, augment and confirm my decided predilection for the character of a private citizen, yet it would be no one of these motives, nor the hazard to which my former reputation might be exposed, nor the terror of encountering new fatigues and troubles, that would deter me from an acceptance [of the presidency]; but a belief, that some other person, who had less pretence and less inclination to be excused, could execute all the duties full as satisfactorily as myself. * * * You will perceive, my dear Sir, by what is here observed, (and which you will be pleased to consider in the light of a confidential communication,) that my inclinations will dispose and decide me to remain as I am, unless a clear and insurmountable conviction should be impressed on my mind, that some very disagreeable consequences must, in all human probability, result from the indulgence of my wishes."—*Washington to Henry Lee*, 22 September, 1788.

apprehend that I might soon be obliged to answer the question, whether I would go again into public life or not.

You will see, my dear Sir, from this train of reflections, that I have lately had enough of my own perplexities to think of, without adverting much to the affairs of others. So much have I been otherwise occupied, and so little agency did I wish to have in electioneering, that I have never entered into a single discussion with any person, nor, to the best of my recollection, expressed a single sentiment, orally or in writing, respecting the appointment of a vice-president. From the extent and respectability of Massachusetts, it might reasonably be expected, that he would be chosen from that State. But, having taken it for granted, that the person selected for that important place would be a true federalist, in that case I was altogether disposed to acquiesce in the prevailing sentiments of the electors, without giving any unbecoming preference, or incurring any unnecessary ill will. Since it here seems proper to touch a little more fully upon that point, I will frankly give you my manner of thinking, and what, under certain circumstances, would be my manner of acting.

For this purpose I must speak again hypothetically for argument's sake, and say, supposing I should be appointed to the administration, and supposing I should accept it, I most solemnly declare, that whosoever shall be found to enjoy the confidence of the States, so far as to be elected vice-president, cannot be disagreeable to me in that

office.[1] And, even if I had any predilection, I flatter myself I possess patriotism enough to sacrifice it at the shrine of my country; where it will be unavoidably necessary for me to have made infinitely greater sacrifices, before I can find myself in the supposed predicament, that is to say, before I can be connected with others in any possible political relation. In truth I believe, that I have no prejudices on the subject, and that it would not be in the power of any evil-minded persons, who wished to disturb the harmony of those concerned in the government, to infuse them into my mind. For, to continue the same hypothesis one step farther, supposing myself to be connected in office with any gentleman of character, I would most certainly treat him with perfect sincerity and the greatest candor in every respect. I would give him my full confidence, and use my utmost endeavors to coöperate with him in promoting and rendering permanent the national prosperity. This should be my great, my only aim, under the fixed and irrevocable resolution of leaving to other hands the helm of the State, as soon as my services could possibly with propriety be dispensed with.

I have thus, my dear Sir, insensibly been led into a longer detail than I intended, and have used more egotism than I could have wished, for which I urge

[1] "From different channels of information it seemed probable to me, even before the receipt of your letter, that Mr. John Adams would be chosen vice-president. He will doubtless make a very good one; and let whoever may occupy the first seat, I shall be entirely satisfied with that arrangement for filling the second office."—*Washington to Knox*, 1 January, 1789.

no other apology, than but my opinion of your friendship, discretion, and candor. I am, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 29 January, 1789.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

* * * The choice of senators, representatives, and electors, which (excepting in that of the last description) took place at different times in the different States, has afforded abundant topics for domestic news since the beginning of autumn. I need not enumerate the several particulars, as I imagine you see most of them detailed in the American gazettes. I will content myself with only saying, that the elections have been hitherto vastly more favorable than we could have expected, that federal sentiments seem to be growing with uncommon rapidity, and that this increasing unanimity is not less indicative of the good disposition than the good sense of the Americans. Did it not savor so much of partiality for my countrymen, I might add, that I cannot help flattering myself, that the new Congress, on account of the self-created respectability and various talents of its members, will not be inferior to any Assembly in the world. From these and some other circumstances I really entertain greater hopes, that America will not finally disappoint the expectations of her friends, than I have at almost any former period. Still, however, in such a fickle

state of existence I would not be too sanguine in indulging myself with the contemplation of scenes of uninterrupted prosperity, lest some unforeseen mischance or perverseness should occasion the greater mortification, by blasting the enjoyment in the very bud.

I can say little or nothing new, in consequence of the repetition of your opinion, on the expediency there will be for my accepting the office to which you refer. Your sentiments, indeed, coincide much more nearly with those of my other friends, than with my own feelings. In truth my difficulties increase and magnify as I draw towards the period, when, according to the common belief, it will be necessary for me to give a definitive answer, in one way or another. Should circumstances render it in a manner inevitably necessary to be in the affirmative, be assured, my dear Sir, I shall assume the task with the most unfeigned reluctance, and with a real diffidence, for which I shall probably receive no credit from the world. If I know my own heart, nothing short of a conviction of duty will induce me again to take an active part in public affairs; and, in that case, if I can form a plan for my own conduct, my endeavors shall be unremittingly exerted, (even at the hazard of former fame or present popularity,) to extricate my country from the embarrassments in which it is entangled through want of credit; and to establish a general system of policy, which if pursued will ensure permanent felicity to the commonwealth. I think I see a path as clear and as direct as a ray of light,

which leads to the attainment of that object. Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people. Happily the present posture of affairs, and the prevailing disposition of my countrymen, promise to coöperate in establishing those four great and essential pillars of public felicity.

What has been considered at the moment as a disadvantage, will probably turn out for our good. While our commerce has been considerably curtailed, for want of that extensive credit formerly given in Europe, and for default of remittance, the useful arts have been almost imperceptibly pushed to a considerable degree of perfection.

Though I would not force the introduction of manufactures, by extravagant encouragements, and to the prejudice of agriculture, yet I conceive much might be done in that way by women, children, and others, without taking one really necessary hand from tilling the earth. Certain it is, great savings are already made in many articles of apparel, furniture, and consumption. Equally certain it is, that no diminution in agriculture has taken place, at the time when greater and more substantial improvements in manufactures were making, than were ever before known in America. In Pennsylvania they have attended particularly to the fabrication of cotton cloths, hats, and all articles in leather. In Massachusetts, they are establishing factories of duck, cordage, glass, and several other extensive and useful branches. The number of shoes made in one town, and nails in

another, is incredible. In that State and Connecticut are also factories of superfine and other broadcloths. I have been writing to our friend General Knox this day to procure me homespun broadcloth of the Hartford fabric, to make a suit of clothes for myself. I hope it will not be a great while before it will be unfashionable for a gentleman to appear in any other dress. Indeed, we have already been too long subject to British prejudices. I use no porter or cheese in my family but such as is made in America. Both those articles may now be purchased of an excellent quality.

While you are quarrelling among yourselves in Europe, while one king is running mad, and others acting as if they were already so, by cutting the throats of the subjects of their neighbors, I think you need not doubt, my dear Marquis, we shall continue in tranquillity here, and that population will be progressive so long as there shall continue to be so many easy means for obtaining a subsistence, and so ample a field for the exertion of talents and industry. All my family join in compliments to Madame de Lafayette and yourself. Adieu.

INAUGURAL SPEECH

TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, APRIL 30, 1789

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event

could have filled me with greater anxieties, than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the 14th day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and, in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years; a retreat which was rendered every day more necessary as well as more dear to me, by the addition of habit to inclination, and of frequent interruptions in my health to the gradual waste committed on it by time. On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust, to which the voice of my country called me, being sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications, could not but overwhelm with despondence one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature, and unpractised in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver is, that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be affected. All I dare hope is, that, if in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens; and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried

cares before me; my error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency. And, in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted,

cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seems to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none, under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.

By the article establishing the executive department, it is made the duty of the President "to recommend to your consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The circumstances, under which I now meet you, will acquit me from entering into that subject farther than to refer you to the great constitutional charter under which we are assembled; and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which your attention is to be given. It will be more consistent with those circumstances, and far more congenial with the feelings which actuate me, to substitute, in place of a recommendation of particular measures, the tribute that is due to the talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism, which adorn the characters selected to devise and adopt them. In these honorable qualifications I behold the surest pledges, that as, on one side, no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views or party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye, which ought to watch over this great

assemblage of communities and interests; so, on another, that the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of a free government be exemplified by all the attributes, which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world.

I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction, which an ardent love for my country can inspire; since there is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as *deeply,* perhaps as *finally* staked, on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people.

Besides the ordinary objects submitted to your care, it will remain with your judgment to decide, how far an exercise of the occasional power delegated by the fifth article of the Constitution is rendered expedient at the present juncture by the nature of objections which have been urged against the system, or by the degree of inquietude which

has given birth to them. Instead of undertaking particular recommendations on this subject, in which I could be guided by no lights derived from official opportunities, I shall again give way to my entire confidence in your discernment and pursuit of the public good; for I assure myself, that, whilst you carefully avoid every alteration, which might endanger the benefits of a united and effective government, or which ought to await the future lessons of experience; a reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen, and a regard for the public harmony, will sufficiently influence your deliberations on the question, how far the former can be more impregnably fortified, or the latter be safely and advantageously promoted.

To the preceding observations I have one to add, which will be most properly addressed to the House of Representatives. It concerns myself, and will therefore be as brief as possible. When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty required, that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed. And being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline as inapplicable to myself any share in the personal emoluments, which may be indispensably included in a permanent provision for the executive department; and must accordingly pray, that the pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed may, during my continuance in it, be limited to

such actual expenditures as the p
be thought to require.

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may be equally *conspicuous* in the
the temperate consultations, and the wise measures, on which the success of this government must depend.

REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE SENATE [1]

8 May, 1789.

GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for your address, in which the most affectionate sentiments are expressed in the most

[1] After the delivery of the President's Inaugural Address, the Senate and the House of Representatives each sent to him addresses in reply. Their character and tone may be inferred from these sentences from the answer of the Senate:

"SIR: We, the Senate of the United States, return you our sincere thanks for your excellent speech delivered to both Houses of Congress, congratulate you on the complete organization of the Federal Government, and felicitate ourselves and our fellow-citizens on your elevation to the office of President, an office highly important by the powers constitutionally an-

obliging terms. The coincidence of circumstances, which led to this auspicious crisis, the confidence reposed in me by my fellow-citizens, and the assistance I may expect from counsels, which will be dictated by an enlarged and liberal policy, seem to presage a more prosperous issue to my administration, than a diffidence of my abilities had taught me to anticipate. I now feel myself inexpressibly happy in a belief, that Heaven, which has done so much for our infant nation, will not withdraw its providential influence before our political felicity shall have been completed; and in a conviction that the Senate will at all times co-operate in every measure which may tend to promote the welfare of this confederated republic.

Thus supported by a firm trust in the great Arbiter of the universe, aided by the collected wisdom of the Union, and imploring the divine benediction on our joint exertions in the service of our country, I readily engage with you in the arduous but pleasing task of attempting to make a nation happy.

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nexed to it and extremely honorable from the manner in which the appointment is made."

After expressing their pleasure that he had again entered public life, and assuring him of their support in carrying out the policy which he had indicated, the address concludes:

"We commend you, sir, to the protection of Almighty God, earnestly beseeching Him long to preserve a life so valuable and dear to the people of the United States, and that your Administration may be prosperous to the nation and glorious to yourself."

The full text of the answers of the two houses may be found in Richardson, *The Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, i., 54, 56.

REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES [1]

8 May, 1789.

GENTLEMEN,

Your very affectionate address produces emotions, which I know not how to express. I feel, that my past endeavors in the service of my country are far overpaid by its goodness; and I fear much, that my future ones may not fulfil your kind anticipation. All that I can promise is, that they will be invariably directed by an honest and an ardent zeal. Of this resource my heart assures me. For all beyond, I rely on the wisdom and patriotism of those with whom I am to co-operate, and a continuance of the blessings of Heaven on our beloved country.

SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, JANUARY 8, 1790

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I embrace with great satisfaction the opportunity, which now presents itself, of congratulating you on the present favorable prospects of our pub-

[1] The answer of the House of Representatives began with these words:

"SIR: The Representatives of the people of the United States present their congratulations on the event by which your fellow-citizens have attested the pre-eminence of your merit. You have long held the first place in their esteem. You have often received tokens of their affection. You now possess the only proof that remained of their gratitude for your services, of

lic affairs. The recent accession of the important State of North Carolina to the constitution of the United States (of which official information has been received), the rising credit and respectability of our country, and the general and increasing good will towards the government of the Union, and the concord, peace, and plenty, with which we are blessed, are circumstances auspicious, in an eminent degree, to our national prosperity.

In resuming your consultations for the general good, you cannot but derive encouragement from the reflection, that the measures of the last session have been as satisfactory to your constituents, as the novelty and difficulty of the work allowed you to hope. Still further to realize their expectations, and to secure the blessings, which a gracious Providence has placed within our reach, will, in the course of the present important session, call for the cool and deliberate exertion of your patriotism, firmness, and wisdom.

Among the many interesting objects, which will engage your attention, that of providing for the common defence will merit particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.

A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite; and their safety and in-

their reverence for your wisdom, and of their confidence in your virtues. You enjoy the highest, because the truest, honor of being the first Magistrate by the unanimous choice of the freest people on the face of the earth."—Richardson, *The Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, i., 56.

terest require, that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent of others for essential, particularly for military, supplies.

The proper establishment of the troops, which may be deemed indispensable, will be entitled to mature consideration. In the arrangements which may be made respecting it, it will be of importance to conciliate the comfortable support of the officers and soldiers with a due regard to economy.

There was reason to hope, that the pacific measures, adopted with regard to certain hostile tribes of Indians, would have relieved the inhabitants of our southern and western frontiers from their depredations. But you will perceive, from the information contained in the papers, which I shall direct to be laid before you, (comprehending a communication from the commonwealth of Virginia,) that we ought to be prepared to afford protection to those parts of the Union, and, if necessary, to punish aggressors.

The interest of the United States requires, that our intercourse with other nations should be facilitated by such provisions as will enable me to fulfil my duty in that respect, in the manner which circumstances may render most conducive to the public good; and, to this end, that the compensations, to be made to the persons who may be employed, should, according to the nature of their appointments, be defined by law, and a competent fund designated for defraying the expenses incident to the conduct of our foreign affairs.

Various considerations also render it expedient, that the terms, on which foreigners may be admitted to the rights of citizens, should be speedily ascertained by a uniform rule of naturalization.

Uniformity in the currency, weight, and measures of the United States is an object of great importance, and will, I am persuaded, be duly attended to.

The advancement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, by all proper means, will not, I trust, need recommendation. But I cannot forbear intimating to you the expediency of giving effectual encouragement, as well to the introduction of new and useful inventions from abroad, as to the exertions of skill and genius in producing them at home; and of facilitating the intercourse between the distant parts of our country by a due attention to the post-office and post-roads.

Nor am I less persuaded, that you will agree with me in opinion, that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community, as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways; by convincing those who are intrusted with the public administration, that every valuable end of government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people; and by teaching the people themselves to know,

and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority, between burthens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the laws.

Whether this desirable object will be the best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established, by the institution of a national university, or by any other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the legislature.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I saw with peculiar pleasure, at the close of the last session, the resolution entered into by you, expressive of your opinion, that an adequate provision for the support of the public credit is a matter of high importance to the national honor and prosperity. In this sentiment I entirely concur. And to a perfect confidence in your best endeavors to devise such a provision as will be truly consistent with the end, I add an equal reliance on the cheerful co-operation of the other branch of the legislature. It would be superfluous to specify inducements to a measure, in which the character and permanent interests of the United States are

so obviously and so deeply concerned, and which has received so explicit a sanction from your declaration.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I have directed the proper officers to lay before you respectively such papers and estimates as regard the affairs particularly recommended to your consideration, and necessary to convey to you that information of the State of the Union, which it is my duty to afford.

The welfare of our country is the great object to which our cares and efforts ought to be directed; and I shall derive great satisfaction from a co-operation with you in the pleasing though arduous task of insuring to our fellow-citizens the blessings which they have a right to expect from a free, efficient, and equal government.

TO DAVID STUART

NEW YORK, 28 March, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

* * * I am sorry such jealousies as you speak of should be gaining ground, and are poisoning the minds of the southern people;[1] but admit the fact,

[1] *From Dr. Stuart's Letter.*—"A spirit of jealousy, which may become dangerous to the Union, towards the eastern States, seems to be growing fast among us. It is represented, that the northern phalanx is so firmly united, as to bear down all opposition, while Virginia is unsupported, even by those whose interests are similar to hers. It is the language of all I have seen on their return from New York. Colonel Lee tells me,

which is alleged as the cause of them, and give it full scope, does it amount to more than what was known to every man of information before, at, and since the adoption of the constitution? Was it not always believed, that there are some points which peculiarly interest the eastern States? And did any one, who reads human nature, and more especially the character of the eastern people, conceive that they would not pursue them steadily by a combination of their force? Are there not other points, which equally concern the southern States? If these States are less tenacious of their interest, or if, whilst the eastern move in a solid phalanx to effect their views, the southern are always divided, which of the two is most to be blamed? That there is a diversity of interests in the Union none has denied. That this is the case, also, in every State is equally certain; and that it even extends to the counties of individual States can be as readily proved. Instance the southern and northern parts of Virginia, the upper and lower parts of South Carolina, &c. Have not the interests of these always been at variance? Witness the county of Fairfax. Have not the interests of the people of that county varied, or the inhabitants been taught

that many, who were warm supporters of the government, are changing their sentiments, from a conviction of the impracticability of union with States, whose interests are so dissimilar to those of Virginia. I fear the Colonel is one of the number. The late applications to Congress, respecting the slaves, will certainly tend to promote this spirit. It gives particular umbrage, that the Quakers should be so busy in this business. That they will raise up a storm against themselves, appears to me very certain." Abingdon, Virginia, March 15th.—*Sparks.*

to believe so? These are well-known truths, and yet it did not follow, that separation was to result from the disagreement.

To constitute a dispute there must be two parties. To understand it well, both parties, and all the circumstances, must be fully heard; and, to accommodate differences, temper and mutual forbearance are requisite. Common danger brought the States into confederacy, and on their union our safety and importance depend. A spirit of accommodation was the basis of the present constitution. Can it be expected, then, that the southern or the eastern parts of the empire will succeed in all their measures? Certainly not. But I will readily grant, that more points will be carried by the latter than the former, and for the reason which has been mentioned, namely, that, in all great national questions, they move in unison, whilst the others are divided. But I ask again, which is most blameworthy, those who see, and will steadily pursue their interest, or those who cannot see, or, seeing, will not act wisely? And I will ask another question, of the highest magnitude in my mind, to wit, if the eastern and northern States are dangerous *in union,* will they be less so in *separation?* If self-interest is their governing principle, will it forsake them, or be less restrained by such an event? I hardly think it would. Then, independent of other considerations, what would Virginia, (and such other States as might be inclined to join her,) gain by a separation? Would they not, most unquestionably, be the weaker party?

Men, who go from hence without feeling themselves of so much consequence as they wished to be considered, and disappointed expectants, added to malignant, designing characters, who miss no opportunity of aiming a blow at the constitution, paint highly on one side, without bringing into view the arguments, which are offered on the other.

It is to be lamented, that the editors of the different gazettes in the Union do not more generally and more correctly (instead of stuffing their papers with scurrility and nonsensical declamation, which few would read if they were apprized of the contents,) publish the debates in Congress on all great national questions. And this, with no uncommon pains, every one of them might do. The principles upon which the difference of opinion arises, as well as the decisions, would then come fully before the public, and afford the best data for its judgment. * * *

The memorial of the Quakers (and a very *mal-apropos* one it was) has at length been put to sleep, and will scarcely awake before the year 1808.[1]

I am, dear Sir, &c.

[1] The Quakers at their annual meetings held in New York and Philadelphia in 1789 had petitioned Congress to adopt measures for the abolition of the slave-trade. These petitions were referred to a committee who brought in a series of resolutions which after considerable amendment were adopted by the House of Representatives in this form:

"That the migration or importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, cannot be prohibited by Congress, prior to the year 1808.

"That Congress have no authority to interfere in the emancipation of slaves, or in the treatment of them within any of the

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS

PHILADELPHIA, 20 July, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letters of the 16th of February and 3d of May, and am much obliged by your observations on the situation, manners, customs, and dispositions of the Spanish nation. In this age of free inquiry and enlightened reason, it is to be hoped, that the condition of the people in every country will be bettered, and the happiness of mankind promoted. Spain appears to be so much behind the other nations of Europe in liberal policy, that a long time will undoubtedly elapse, before the people of that kingdom can taste the sweets of liberty, and enjoy the natural advantages of their country.

In my last I mentioned my intention of visiting the southern States, which I have since accomplished, and have the pleasure to inform you, that I performed a journey of eighteen hundred and eighty-seven miles without meeting with any interruption by sickness, bad weather, or any untoward accident. Indeed, so highly were we favored, that we arrived at each place, where I proposed to

States; it remaining with the several States alone to provide any regulations therein, which humanity and true policy may require.

"That Congress have authority to restrain the citizens of the United States from carrying on the African trade, for the purpose of supplying foreigners with slaves, and of providing, by proper regulations, for the humane treatment, during their passage, of slaves imported by the said citizens into the States admitting such importation."—*Annals of Congress, First Congress*, ii., 1474.

make any halt, on the very day I fixed upon before we set out. The same horses performed the whole tour; and although much reduced in flesh, kept up their full spirits to the last day.

I am much pleased that I have taken this journey, as it has enabled me to see with my own eyes the situation of the country through which we travelled, and to learn more accurately the disposition of the people than I could have done by any information.

The country appears to be in a very improving state, and industry and frugality are becoming much more fashionable than they have hitherto been there. Tranquillity reigns among the people, with that disposition towards the general government, which is likely to preserve it. They begin to feel the good effects of equal laws and equal protection. The farmer finds a ready market for his produce, and the merchant calculates with more certainty on his payments. Manufactures have as yet made but little progress in that part of the country, and it will probably be a long time before they are brought to that state, to which they have already arrived in the middle and eastern parts of the Union.

Each day's experience of the government of the United States seems to confirm its establishment, and to render it more popular. A ready acquiescence in the laws made under it shows in a strong light the confidence, which the people have in their representatives, and in the upright views of those, who administer the government. At the time of

passing a law imposing a duty on home-made spirits, it was vehemently affirmed by many, that such a law could never be executed in the southern States, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina. As this law came in force only on the 1st of this month, little can be said of its effects from experience; but, from the best information I could get on my journey, respecting its operation on the minds of the people, (and I took some pains to obtain information on this point,) there remains no doubt but it will be carried into effect, not only without opposition, but with very general approbation in those very parts where it was foretold, that it would never be submitted to by any one. It is possible, however, and perhaps not improbable, that some demagogue may start up, and produce and get signed some resolutions declaratory of their disapprobation of the measure.

Our public credit stands on that ground, which three years ago it would have been considered as a species of madness to have foretold. The astonishing rapidity, with which the newly instituted bank was filled, gives an unexampled proof (here) of the resources of our countrymen, and their confidence in public measures. On the first day of opening the subscription, the whole number of shares (twenty thousand) were taken up in one hour, and application made for upwards of four thousand shares more than were granted by the institution, besides many others that were coming in from different quarters.

For some time past the western frontiers have

been alarmed by depredations committed by some hostile tribes of Indians; but such measures are now in train as will, I presume, either bring them to sue for peace before a stroke is struck at them, or make them feel the effects of an enmity too sensibly to provoke it again unnecessarily, unless, as is much suspected, they are countenanced, abetted, and supported in their hostile views by the British. Though I must confess I cannot see much prospect of living in tranquillity with them, so long as a spirit of land-jobbing prevails, and our frontier settlers entertain the opinion, that there is not the same crime (or indeed no crime at all) in killing an Indian as in killing a white man.

You have been informed of the spot fixed on for the seat of government on the Potomac; and I am now happy to add, that all matters between the proprietors of the soil and the public are settled to the mutual satisfaction of the parties, and that the business of laying out the city, the grounds for public buildings, walks, &c. is progressing under the inspection of Major L'Enfant with pleasing prospects.

Thus much for our American affairs. And I wish I could say as much in favor of circumstances in Europe. But our accounts from thence do not paint the situation of the inhabitants in very pleasing colors. One part exhibits war and devastations, another preparations for war, a third commotions, a fourth direful apprehensions of commotions; and indeed there seems to be scarcely

a nation enjoying uninterrupted, unapprehensive tranquillity.

The example of France will undoubtedly have its effects on other kingdoms. Poland, by the public papers, appears to have made large and unexpected strides towards liberty, which, if true, reflects great honor on the present King, who seems to have been the principal promoter of the business. * * *

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

[PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL]

MOUNT VERNON, 29 July, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have not yet received the new regulations of allowances to the surveyors or collectors of the duties on spirituous liquors; but this by the by. My present purpose is to write you a letter on a more interesting and important subject. I do it in strict confidence, and with frankness and freedom.

On my way home, and since my arrival here, I have endeavored to learn from sensible and moderate men, known friends to the government, the sentiments which are entertained of public measures. These all agree, that the country is prosperous and happy, but they seem to be alarmed at that system of policy, and those interpretations of the constitution, which have taken place in Congress. Others less friendly, perhaps, to the government, and more disposed to arraign the conduct of its offi-

cers (among whom may be classed my neighbor and *quondam* friend Colonel M[ason], go further, and enumerate a variety of matters, which, as well as I recollect, may be adduced under the following heads, viz.:

1. "That the public debt is greater than we can possibly pay, before other causes of adding new debt to it will occur; and that this has been artificially created by adding together the whole amount of the debtor and creditor sides of the accounts, instead of taking only their balances, which could have been paid off in a short time.

2. "That this accumulation of debt has taken for ever out of our power those easy sources of revenue, which, applied to the ordinary necessities and exigencies of government, would have answered them habitually, and covered us from habitual murmurings against taxes and tax-gatherers, reserving extraordinary calls for extraordinary occasions, which would animate the people to meet them.

3. "That the calls for money have been no greater than we must generally expect for the same or equivalent exigencies, yet we are already obliged to strain the *impost* till it produces clamor, and will produce evasion, and war on our own citizens to collect it; and even to resort to an *excise* law, of odious character with the people, partial in its operation, unproductive, unless enforced by arbitrary and vexatious means, and committing the authority of the government in parts where resistance is most probable and coercion least practicable.

4. "They cite propositions in Congress, and suspect other projects on foot, still to increase the mass of the debt.

5. "They say, that by borrowing at two thirds of the interest we might have paid off the principal in two

thirds of the time; but that from this we are precluded by its being made irredeemable but in small portions and long terms.

6. "That this irredeemable quality was given it for the avowed purpose of inviting its transfer to foreign countries.

7. "They predict, that this transfer of the principal, when completed, will occasion an exportation of three millions of dollars annually for the interest, a drain of coin, of which as there has been no example, no calculation can be made of its consequences.

8. "That the banishment of our coin will be completed by the creation of ten millions of paper money in the form of bank bills, now issuing into circulation.

9. "They think the ten or twelve per cent. annual profit, paid to the lenders of this paper medium, are taken out of the pocket of the people, who would have had without interest the coin it is banishing.

10. "That all the capital employed in paper speculation is barren and useless, producing, like that on a gaming-table, no accession to itself, and is withdrawn from commerce and agriculture, where it would have produced an addition to the common mass.

11. "That it nourishes in our citizens vice and idleness instead of industry and morality.

12. "That it has furnished effectual means of corrupting such a portion of the legislature, as turns the balance between the honest voters, whichever way it is directed.

13. "That this corrupt squadron, deciding the voice of the legislature, have manifested their dispositions to get rid of the limitations imposed by the constitution on the general legislature; limitations, on the faith of which the States acceded to that instrument.

14. "That the ultimate object of all this is to prepare the way for a change, from the present republican form of government to that of a monarchy, of which the British constitution is to be the model.

15. "That this was contemplated in the Convention they say is no secret, because its partisans have made none of it. To effect it then was impracticable, but they are still eager after their object, and are predisposing every thing for its ultimate attainment.

16. "So many of them have got into the legislature that, aided by the corrupt squadron of paper-dealers, who are at their devotion, they make a majority in both houses.

17. "The republican party, who wish to preserve the government in its present form, are fewer, even when joined by the two, three, or half-dozen antifederalists, who, though they dare not avow it, are still opposed to any general government; but, being less so to a republican than a monarchical one, they naturally join those whom they think pursuing the lesser evil.

18. "Of all the mischiefs objected to the system of measures before mentioned, none, they add, is so afflicting and fatal to every honest hope, as the corruption of the legislature. As it was the earliest of these measures, it became the instrument for producing the rest, and will be the instrument of producing in future a king, lords, and commons, or whatever else those who direct it may choose. Withdrawn such a distance from the eye of their constituents, and these so dispersed as to be inaccessible to public information, and particularly to that of the conduct of their own representatives, they will form the worst government upon earth if the means of their corruption be not prevented.

19. "The only hope of safety, they say, hangs now on the numerous representation, which is to come forward the ensuing year; but, should the majority of the new members be still in the same principles with the present, show so much dereliction of republican government, and such a disposition to encroach upon or explain away the limited powers of the constitution in order to change it, it is not easy to conjecture what would be the re-

sult, nor what means would be resorted to for the correction of the evil. True wisdom, they acknowledge, should direct temperate and peaceable measures; but, they add, the division of sentiments and interest happens unfortunately to be so geographical, that no mortal can say that what is most wise and temperate would prevail against what is more easy and obvious. They declare they can contemplate no evil more incalculable, than the breaking of the Union into two or more parts; yet when they view the mass, which opposed the original coalescence, when they consider that it lay chiefly in the southern quarter, and that the legislature have availed themselves of no occasion of allaying it, but, on the contrary, whenever northern and southern prejudices have come into conflict, the latter have been sacrificed and the former soothed.

20. "That the owers of the debt are in the southern, and the holders of it in the northern division.

21. "That the antifederal champions are now strengthened in argument by the fufilment of their predictions, which has been brought about by the monarchical federalists themselves; who, having been for the new government merely as a stepping-stone to monarchy, have themselves adopted the very constructions of the constitution, of which, when advocating the acceptance before the tribunal of the people, they declared it unsusceptible; whilst the republican federalists, who espoused the same government for its intrinsic merits, are disarmed of their weapons, that which they denied as prophecy being now become true history. Who, therefore, can be sure, they ask, that these things may not proselyte the small number, which was wanting to place the majority on the other side? And this, they add, is the event at which they tremble." [1]

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[1] This is copied almost verbatim from a letter which the writer had recently received from Jefferson.—*Sparks.* Hamilton's re-

These, as well as my memory serves me, are the sentiments, which directly and indirectly have been disclosed to me. To obtain light and to pursue truth being my sole aim, and wishing to have before me explanations of, as well as the complaints on, measures, in which the public interest, harmony, and peace is so deeply concerned, and my public conduct so much involved, it is my request, and you would oblige me by furnishing me with your ideas upon the discontents here enumerated; and for this purpose I have thrown them into heads or sections, and numbered them, that those ideas may be applied to the correspondent numbers. Although I do not mean to hurry you in giving your thoughts on occasion of this letter, yet, as soon as you can make it convenient to yourself, it would for more reasons than one be agreeable and very satisfactory to me. * * *

With affectionate regard, I am, &c.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, ATTORNEY-GENERAL

[PRIVATE]

MOUNT VERNON, 26 August, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

The purpose of this letter is merely to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 5th and 13th instant, and to thank you for the information in both, without entering into the details of either.[1]

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ply is printed in his *Works* (Lodge), ii., 236, but is wrongly described as a "cabinet paper."—*Ford.*

[1] Randolph had written urging him to accept a second term.

With respect, however, to the interesting subject treated on in that of the 5th, I can express but one sentiment at this time, and that is a wish, a devout one, that, whatever my ultimate determination shall be, it may be for the best. The subject never recurs to my mind but with additional poignancy; and, from the declining state in the health of my nephew, to whom my concerns of a domestic and private nature are entrusted, it comes with aggravated force. But as the All-wise Disposer of events has hitherto watched over my steps, I trust, that, in the important one I may soon be called upon to take, he will mark the course so plainly, as that I cannot mistake the way. In full hope of this, I will take no measures yet a while, that will not leave me at liberty to decide from circumstances, and the best lights I can obtain on the subject.

I shall be happy, in the mean time, to see a cessation of the abuses of public officers, and of those attacks upon almost every measure of government, with which some of the gazettes are so strongly impregnated; and which cannot fail, if persevered in with the malignancy with which they now teem, of rending the Union asunder. The seeds of discontent, distrust, and irritation, which are so plentifully sown, can scarcely fail to produce this effect, and to mar that prospect of happiness, which perhaps never beamed with more effulgence upon any people under the sun; and this too at a time, when all Europe are gazing with admiration at the brightness of our prospects. And for what is all

this? Among other things, to afford nuts for our transatlantic (what shall I call them?) foes.

In a word, if the government and the officers of it are to be the constant theme for newspaper abuse, and this too without condescending to investigate the motives or the facts, it will be impossible, I conceive, for any man living to manage the helm or to keep the machine together. But I am running from my text, and therefore will only add assurances of the affectionate esteem and regard, with which I am, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, SECRETARY OF STATE

[PRIVATE]

18 October, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I did not require the evidence of the extracts, which you enclosed to me, to convince me of your attachment to the constitution of the United States, or of your disposition to promote the general welfare of this country; but I regret, deeply regret, the difference in opinions, which have arisen and divided you and another principal officer of the government; and wish devoutly there could be an accommodation of them by mutual yieldings.[1]

[1] Hamilton and Jefferson took no pains to conceal the bitterness which had grown up between them. Jefferson wrote, "Hamilton and I were pitted against each other every day in the cabinet like two fighting cocks." Their hostility caused their chief a great deal of pain and anxiety. He tried in vain to reconcile them and persuade them to work together in harmony. See his letters of August 23, 1792, to Jefferson and of August 26, 1792, to Hamilton in his *Writings* (Ford's edition),

A measure of this sort would produce harmony and consequent good in our public councils. The contrary will inevitably introduce confusion and serious mischiefs; and for what? Because mankind cannot think alike, but would adopt different means to attain the same ends. For I will frankly and solemnly declare, that I believe the views of both of you to be pure and well-meant, and that experience only will decide, with respect to the salubrity of the measures, which are the subjects of dispute. Why, then, when some of the best citizens in the United States, men of discernment, uniform and tried patriots, who have no sinister views to promote, but are chaste in their ways of thinking and acting, are to be found, some on one side and some on the other of the questions, which have caused these agitations, should either of you be so tenacious of your opinions, as to make no allowances for those of the other? I could, and indeed was about to add more on this interesting subject, but will forbear, at least for the present, after expressing a wish, that the cup, which has been presented to us may not be snatched from our lips by a discordance of action, when I am persuaded there is no discordance in your views. I have a great, a sincere esteem and regard for you both, and ardently wish that some line could be marked out by which both of you could walk. I am, always, &c.[1]

xii., 171, 176. The opposition between the two leaders extended to their followers, and was influential in the formation of our first political parties, the Federalists and the Republicans.

[1] This letter was in answer to a brief one from Mr. Jefferson, accompanying extracts from letters written by him to

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 4, 1793

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

I am again called upon, by the voice of my country, to execute the functions of its Chief Magistrate. When the occasion proper for it shall arrive, I shall endeavor to express the high sense I entertain of this distinguished honor, and of the confidence which has been reposed in me by the people of United America. Previous to the execution of any official act of the President, the Constitution requires an oath of office. This oath I am now about to take and in your presence; that, if it shall be found during my administration of the government, I have in any instance violated willingly or knowingly the injunction thereof, I may, besides incurring constitutional punishment, be subject to the upbraiding of all who are now witnesses of the present solemn ceremony.

TO HENRY LEE, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

[PRIVATE]

PHILADELPHIA, 21 July, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

* * * The communications in your letter were pleasing and grateful; for, although I have done

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different persons, and giving his views of the Constitution as expressed soon after that instrument was adopted by the general convention. For the letters containing these extracts, see Jefferson's *Writings*, vol. ii., p. 290. *North American Review*, vol. xxv., p. 268.—*Sparks.*

no public act with which my mind upbraids me, yet it is highly satisfactory to learn, that the things which I do, of an interesting tendency to the peace and happiness of this country, are generally approved by my fellow citizens. But, were the case otherwise, I should not be less inclined to know the sense of the people upon every matter of great public concern; for, as I have no wish superior to that of promoting the happiness and welfare of this country, so, consequently, it is only for me to know the means to accomplish the end, if it be within the compass of my powers.

That there are in this, as well as in all other countries, discontented characters, I well know; as also that these characters are actuated by very different views; some good, from an opinion that the measures of the general government are impure; some bad, and, if I might be allowed to use so harsh an expression, diabolical, inasmuch as they are not only meant to impede the measures of that government generally, but more especially, (as a great mean towards the accomplishment of it,) to destroy the confidence, which it is necessary for the people to place, (until they have unequivocal proof of demerit,) in their public servants. For in this light I consider myself, whilst I am an occupant of office; and, if they were to go further and call me their slave, during this period, I would not dispute the point.

But in what will this abuse terminate? The result, as it respects myself, I care not; for I have a consolation within, that no earthly efforts can

deprive me of, and that is, that neither ambitious nor interested motives have influenced my conduct. The arrows of malevolence, therefore, however, barbed and well pointed, never can reach the most vulnerable part of me; though, whilst I am *up* as a *mark,* they will be continually aimed. The publications in Freneau's and Bache's papers are outrages on common decency; and they progress in that style, in proportion as their pieces are treated with contempt, and are passed by in silence, by those at whom they are aimed. The tendency of them, however, is too obvious to be mistaken by men of cool and dispassionate minds, and, in my opinion, ought to alarm them; because it is difficult to prescribe bounds to the effect. * * *

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS

PHILADELPHIA, 12 June, 1796.

MY DR. HUMPHREYS—

I could not suffer Captain O'Brien to return without carrying along with him this evidence of my continued regard and friendship for you. In expressing of which I shall be concise, for a long and interesting session closed only the first day of this month—many laws which require immediate attention and execution; added to a preparation for a journey to Mount Vernon (tomorrow) for a little relaxation from the unpleasant scenes which have been and are continually presenting them-

selves to my view, will not, however well disposed I might otherwise be, permit me to be profuse.

From the office of State you will receive every thing that relates to business; and the gazettes, which I presume accompany the despatches, will bring you pretty well acquainted with the state of politics and of parties in this country; and shew you in what manner I am attacked for a steady opposition to every measure which has a tendency to disturb the peace and tranquillity of it. But these attacks, unjust and unpleasant as they are, will occasion no change in my conduct; nor will they work any other effect in my mind, than to increase the anxious desire which has long possessed my breast to enjoy in the shades of retirement the consolation of having rendered my country every service my abilities were competent to, uninfluenced by pecuniary or ambitious considerations as they respected myself, and without any attempt to provide for my friends farther than their merits, abstractedly entitle them to—nor an attempt in *any* instance to bring a relation of mine into office. Malignity therefore may dart her shafts; but no earthly power can deprive me of the consolation of knowing that I have not in the course of my administration been guilty of a wilful error, however numerous they may have been from other causes. When you shall think with the poet that "the post of honor is a private station," & may be inclined to enjoy yourself in my shades—(I do not mean the shades below where, if you put it off long, I may be) I can only tell you that you will

meet with the same cordial reception at Mount Vernon that you have always experienced at that place, and that I am, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

MOUNT VERNON, 6 July, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

When I inform you, that your letter of the 19th ultimo [1] went to Philadelphia and returned to this place before it was received by me, it will be admitted, I am persuaded, as an apology for my not having acknowledged the receipt of it sooner.

If I had entertained any suspicions before, that the queries, which have been published in Bache's paper, proceeded from you, the assurances you have given of the contrary would have removed them; but the truth is, I harbored none.[2] I am at no loss

[1] See this letter in Jefferson, *Writings* (Ford's edition), vii., 81, or (Washington's edition), iv., 141.

[2] Bache's paper, *The Aurora*, was conspicuous for its bitter attacks on Washington, whose retirement from the Presidency provoked the following effusion printed in the issue of March 6, 1797:

"'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,' was the pious ejaculation of a pious man who beheld a flood of happiness rushing in upon mankind. If ever there was a time that would license the reiteration of the ejaculation, that time has now arrived, for the man who is the source of all the misfortune of our country is this day reduced to a level with his fellow-citizens, and is no longer possessed of power to multiply evils upon the United States. If ever there was a period for rejoicing, this is the moment. Every heart in unison with the freedom and happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation that the name of Washington ceases from this day to give currency to political insults, and to legalize corruption. A new era is now opening upon us, an era which promises

to *conjecture* from what source they flowed, through what channel they were conveyed, and for what purpose they and similar publications appear. They were known to be in the hands of Mr. Parker in the early part of the last session of Congress. They were shown about by Mr. Giles during the session, and they made their public exhibition about the close of it.

Perceiving and probably hearing, that no abuse in the gazettes would induce me to take notice of anonymous publications against me, those, who were disposed to do me *such friendly offices,* have embraced without restraint every opportunity to weaken the confidence of the people; and, by having the *whole* game in their hands, they have scrupled not to publish things that do not, as well as those which do exist, and to mutilate the latter, so as to make them subserve the purposes which they have in view.

As you have mentioned the subject yourself, it would not be frank, candid, or friendly to conceal, that your conduct has been represented as derogating from that opinion *I* had conceived you enter-

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much to the people, for public measures must now stand upon their own merits, and nefarious projects can no longer be supported by a name. When a retrospect has been taken of the Washingtonian administration for eight years, it is a subject of the greatest astonishment that a single individual should have cankered the principles of republicanism in an enlightened people just emerged from the gulf of despotism, and should have carried his designs against the public liberty so far as to have put in jeopardy its very existence. Such, however, are the facts, and with these staring us in the face, the day ought to be a JUBILEE in the United States."

tained of me; that, to your particular friends and connexions you have described and they have denounced, me as a person under a dangerous influence; and that, if I would listen *more* to some *other* opinions, all would be well. My answer invariably has been, that I had never discovered any thing in the conduct of Mr. Jefferson to raise suspicions in my mind of his insincerity; that, if he would retrace my public conduct while he was in the administration, abundant proofs would occur to him, that truth and right decisions were the *sole* objects of my pursuit; that there were as many instances within his *own* knowledge of my having decided *against* as *in favor* of the opinions of the person evidently alluded to; and, moreover, that I was no believer in the infallibility of the politics or measures of *any man living*. In short, that I was no party man myself, and the first wish of my heart was, if parties did exist, to reconcile them.

To this I may add, and very truly, that, until within the last year or two, I had no conception that parties would or even could go the length I have been witness to; nor did I believe until lately, that it was within the bounds of probability, hardly within those of possibility, that, while I was using my utmost exertions to establish a national character of our own, independent, as far as our obligations and justice would permit, of every nation of the earth, and wished, by steering a steady course, to preserve this country from the horrors of a desolating war, I should be accused of being the enemy of one nation, and subject to the influence of an-

other; and, to prove it, that every act of my administration would be tortured, and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them be made, by giving one side *only* of a subject, and that too in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket. But enough of this, I have already gone further in the expression of my feelings than I intended.[1] * * *

TO PATRICK HENRY

[CONFIDENTIAL]

MOUNT VERNON, 15 January, 1799.

DEAR SIR,

At the threshold of this letter I ought to make an apology for its contents; but, if you will give me credit for my motives, I will contend for no more, however erroneous my sentiments may appear to you.

It would be a waste of time to attempt to bring to the view of a person of your observation and discernment, the endeavors of a certain party among us to disquiet the public mind among us

[1] No correspondence after this date between Washington and Jefferson appears in the letter-books, except a brief note the month following upon an unimportant matter. It has been reported and believed that letters or papers, supposed to have passed between them, or to relate to their intercourse with each other at subsequent dates, were secretly withdrawn from the archives of Mount Vernon after the death of the former. Concerning this fact, no positive testimony remains, either for or against it, among Washington's papers as they came into my hands.—*Sparks.*

by the executive, approved unequivocally by Congress, by the State legislatures, nay, by the people themselves in various meetings, and to preserve the country in peace, are charged as a measure calculated to favor Great Britain at the expense of France, and all those, who had any agency in it are accused of being under the influence of the former and her pensioners; when measures are systematically and pertinaciously pursued, which must eventually dissolve the Union or produce coercion; I say, when these things are become so obvious, ought characters who are best able to rescue their country from the pending evil to remain at home? Rather ought they not to come forward, and by their talents and influence stand in the breach, which such conduct has made on the peace and happiness of this country, and oppose the widening of it?

Vain will it be to look for peace and happiness, or for the security of liberty or property, if civil discord should ensue. And what else can result from the policy of those among us, who, by all the measures in their power, are driving matters to extremity, if they cannot be counteracted effectually? The views of men can only be known, or guessed at, by their words or actions. Can those of the *leaders* of opposition be mistaken, then, if judged by this rule? That they are followed by numbers, who are unacquainted with their designs, and suspect as little the tendency of their principles, I am fully persuaded. But, if their conduct is viewed with indifference, if there is activity and misrepre-

sentation on one side, and supineness on the other, their numbers accumulated by intriguing and discontented foreigners under proscription, who were at war with their own governments, and the greater part of them with *all* governments, they will increase, and nothing short of Omniscience can foretell the consequences.

I come now, my good Sir, to the object of my letter, which is, to express a hope and an earnest wish, that you will come forward at the ensuing elections (if not for Congress, which you may think would take you too long from home), as a candidate for representative in the General Assembly of this commonwealth.

There are, I have no doubt, very many sensible men, who oppose themselves to the torrent, that carries away others who had rather swim with than stem it without an able pilot to conduct them; but these are neither old in legislation, nor well known in the community. Your weight of character and influence in the House of Representatives would be a bulwark against such dangerous sentiments, as are delivered there at present. It would be a rallying-point for the timid, and an attraction of the wavering. In a word, I conceive it of immense importance at this crisis, that you should be there; and I would fain hope, that all minor considerations will be made to yield to the measure.

If I have erroneously supposed that your sentiments on these subjects are in unison with mine, or if I have assumed a liberty, which the occasion does not warrant, I must conclude as I began, with pray-

ing that my motives may be received as an apology, and that my fear, that the tranquillity of the Union, and of this State in particular, is hastening to an awful crisis, has extorted them from me.

With great and very sincere regard and respect, I am, dear Sir, your most obedient, &c.

V

Policies and Opinions

Washington stands alone and unapproachable, like a snow-peak rising above its fellows into the clear air of morning, with a dignity, constancy, and purity which have made him the ideal type of civic virtue to succeeding generations. No greater benefit could have befallen the Republic than to have such a type set from the first before the eye and mind of the people.

JAMES BRYCE.

V

Policies and Opinions

1. Relations with Great Britain

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

New York, 13 October, 1789.

Sir,

It being important to both countries, that the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States should be observed and performed with perfect and mutual good faith, and that a treaty of commerce should be concluded by them, on principles of reciprocal advantage to both, I wish to be ascertained of the sentiments and intentions of the court of London on these interesting subjects.

It appears to me most expedient to have these inquiries made informally, by a private agent; and, understanding that you will soon be in London, I desire you in that capacity, and on the authority and credit of this letter, to converse with his Britannic Majesty's ministers on these points, namely, whether there be any and what objections to per-

forming those articles in the treaty, which remain to be performed on his part; and whether they incline to a treaty of commerce with the United States on any and what terms.

This communication ought regularly to be made to you by the Secretary of State; but, that office not being at present filled, my desire of avoiding delays induces me to make it under my own hand. It is my wish to promote harmony and mutual satisfaction between the two countries; and it would give me great pleasure to find that the result of your agency, in the business now committed to you, will conduce to that end. I am, Sir, yours, &c.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

NEW YORK, 13 October, 1789.

SIR,

My letter to you, herewith enclosed, will give you the credence necessary to enable you to do the business, which it commits to your management, and which I am persuaded you will readily undertake.

Your inquiries will commence by observing, that, as the present constitution of government, and of the courts established in pursuance of it, removes the objections heretofore made to putting the United States in possession of their frontier posts, it is natural to expect from the assurances of his Majesty and the national good faith, that no unnecessary delays will take place. Proceed then to

press a speedy performance of the treaty respecting that object.

Remind them of the article by which it was agreed, that negroes belonging to our citizens should not be carried away, and of the reasonableness of making compensation for them. Learn with precision, if possible, what they mean to do on this head.

The commerce between the two countries you well understand. You are apprized of the sentiments and feelings of the United States on the present state of it; and you doubtless have heard, that, in the late session of Congress, a very respectable number of both houses were inclined to a discrimination of duties unfavorable to Britain, and that it would have taken place but for conciliatory considerations, and the probability that the late change in our government and circumstances would lead to more satisfactory arrangements.

Request to be informed, therefore, whether they contemplate a treaty of commerce with the United States, and on what principles or terms in general. In treating this subject, let it be strongly impressed on your mind, that the privilege of carrying our productions in our vessels to their Islands, and of bringing in return the productions of those Islands to our own ports and markets, is regarded here as of the highest importance; and you will be careful not to countenance any idea of our dispensing with it in a treaty. Ascertain, if possible, their views on this point; for it would not be expedi-

ent to commence negotiations without previously having good reasons to expect a satisfactory termination of them.

It may also be well for you to take a proper occasion of remarking, that their omitting to send a minister here, when the United States sent one to London, did not make an agreeable impression on this country; and request to know what would be their future conduct on similar occasions.

It is in my opinion very important, that we avoid errors in our system of policy respecting Great Britain; and this can only be done by forming a right judgment of their disposition and views. Hence you will perceive how interesting it is, that you obtain the information in question, and that the business be so managed, as that it may receive every advantage, which abilities, address, and delicacy can promise and afford. I am, Sir, yours, &c.

TO JOHN JAY

PHILADELPHIA, 30 August, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 23d of June from London, and the duplicate, have both been received; and your safe arrival after so short a passage gave sincere pleasure, as well on private as on public account, to all your friends in this country; and to none in a greater degree, I can venture to assure you, than it did to myself.[1]

[1] The conclusion of the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain did not leave the two countries on

As you will receive letters from the Secretary of State's office, giving an official account of the public occurrences as they have arisen and progressed, it is unnecessary for me to retouch any of them; and yet I cannot restrain myself from making some observations on the most recent of them, the communication of which was received this morning

cordial terms. The treaty itself was notoriously violated by both parties to it, and Great Britain refused to negotiate a treaty of commerce with her late enemy. The United States had despatched John Adams to London as its minister in 1785, but Great Britain did not accredit a minister to the United States until 1791, and even when he arrived it was found that he had no authority to negotiate a treaty. In 1793 war broke out between Great Britain and France, and American commerce suffered at the hands of both countries. In June, 1793, British war vessels were directed to stop all vessels bound for France with grain and compel them to proceed to a British port. In the following November, this order was supplemented by another directing that all such vessels should be seized and sent to a British prize court. These orders were especially injurious to American commerce, and with other grievances threatened to precipitate a second war between the two countries. In this situation, Washington determined to make another effort to obtain redress. "But," he said in a message to the Senate, "as peace ought to be pursued with unremitting zeal, before the last resource, which has so often been the scourge of nations, and cannot fail to check the advanced prosperity of the United States, I have thought proper to nominate, and do hereby nominate, John Jay as Envoy Extraordinary of the United States to His Britannic Majesty. My confidence in our minister plenipotentiary in London [Thomas Pinckney] continues undiminished. But a mission like this, while it corresponds with the solemnity of the occasion, will announce to the world a solicitude for the friendly adjustment of our complaints, and a reluctance to hostility. Going immediately from the United States, such an envoy will carry with him a full knowledge of the existing temper and sensibility of our country; and will thus be taught to vindicate our rights with firmness, and to cultivate peace with sincerity." —Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, i., 153.

only. I mean the protest of the governor of Upper Canada, delivered by Lieutenant Sheaffe, against our occupying lands far from any of the posts, which long ago they ought to have surrendered, and far within the known and until *now* the acknowledged limits of the United States.

On this irregular and high-handed proceeding of Mr. Simcoe, which is no longer *masked,* I would rather hear what the ministry of Great Britain will say, than pronounce my own sentiments thereon. But can that government or will it attempt, after this *official* act of one of their governors, to hold out ideas of friendly intentions towards the United States, and suffer such conduct to pass with impunity?

This may be considered as the most open and daring act of the British agents in America, though it is not the most hostile or cruel; for there does not remain a doubt in the mind of any well-informed person in this country, not shut against conviction, that all the difficulties we encounter with the Indians, their hostilities, the murders of helpless women and innocent children along our frontiers, result from the conduct of the agents of Great Britain in this country. In vain is it then for its administration in *Britain* to disavow having given orders, which will warrant such conduct, whilst their agents go unpunished; whilst we have a thousand corroborating circumstances, and indeed almost as many evidences, some of which cannot be brought forward, to prove, that they are seducing from our alliance, and endeavoring to

remove over the line, tribes that have hitherto been kept in peace and friendship with us at a heavy expense, and who have no causes of complaint, except pretended ones of their creating; whilst they keep in a state of irritation the tribes, who are hostile to us, and are instigating those, who know little of us or we of them, to unite in the war against us; and whilst it is an undeniable fact, that they are furnishing the whole with arms, ammunition, clothing, and even provisions, to carry on the war; I might go further, and, if they are not much belied, add men also in disguise.

Can it be expected, I ask, so long as these things are known in the United States, or at least firmly believed, and suffered with impunity by Great Britain, that there ever will or can be any cordiality between the two countries? I answer, No. And I will undertake, without the gift of prophecy, to predict, that it will be impossible to keep this country in a state of amity with Great Britain long, if the posts are not surrendered. A knowledge of these being *my* sentiments would have little weight, I am persuaded, with the British administration, nor perhaps with the nation, in effecting the measure; but both may rest satisfied, that, if they want to be in peace with this country, and to enjoy the benefits of its trade, to give up the posts is the only road to it. Withholding them, and the consequences we feel at present continuing, war will be inevitable.

This letter is written to you in extreme haste, whilst the papers respecting this subject I am writ-

ing on are copying at the Secretary of State's office, to go by express to New York, for a vessel which we have just heard sails to-morrow. You will readily perceive, therefore, I had no time for digesting, and as little for correcting it. I shall only add, that you may be assured always of the sincere friendship and affection of yours, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON

[PRIVATE AND PERFECTLY CONFIDENTIAL]

PHILADELPHIA, 3 July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

The treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, which has lately been before the Senate, has, as you will perceive, made its public entry into the Gazettes of this City.—Of course the merits, and demerits of it will (especially in its unfinished state), be freely discussed.[1]

[1] The treaty which Jay negotiated and which is known by his name arrived in Philadelphia March 7, 1795. Its contents seem to have been made known only to Washington and his Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph. On June 8, the Senate met in special session and the treaty was submitted for its approval. Soon afterward a senator from Virginia, in violation of the injunction of secrecy by which all the senators were bound, made the treaty public. Everywhere it excited the most bitter opposition. It failed in so many respects to satisfy the popular expectations that its merits were quite overlooked. Public meetings were held in which it was denounced as a wanton sacrifice of American rights and interests, and the President was urged to refuse to ratify it. Boston, a Federalist stronghold, led the outbreak with a meeting in Faneuil Hall at which a protest was adopted to which Washington returned a dignified but decisive reply. (See page 375.) Jay was burned in effigy and every form of vicarious insult was heaped upon him. Hamilton, when he attempted to defend the treaty at a public meeting in New

It is not the opinion of *those* who were determined (before it was promulgated) to *support* or *oppose* it, that I am sollicitous to obtain; for *these* I well know rarely do more than examine the side to which they lean; without giving the reverse the consideration it deserves;—possibly without a wish to be apprised of the reasons on which the objections are founded.—My desire is to learn from dispassionate men, who have a knowledge of the subject, and abilities to judge of it, the genuine opinion they entertain of *each* article of the instrument; and the *result* of it in the aggregate. In a word, placed on the footing the matter now stands, it is, more than ever, an incumbent duty on

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York, was stoned, and was compelled to leave the platform with blood streaming from his face. A mob burned a copy of the document in front of the residence of the British minister. On June 24, however, the Senate ratified the treaty with certain amendments by precisely the vote required by the Constitution. In spite of the bitter denunciation of it, the treaty was not altogether bad. If it did nothing more, it preserved peace at a time when war would have been most disastrous to the United States. Furthermore, as Jay himself said, there was "no reason to believe or conjecture that one more favorable to us was attainable." This was Washington's view also. "My opinion respecting the treaty," he wrote, "is the same now that it was, namely, not favorable to it, but that it is better to ratify it in the manner the Senate have advised, and with the reservation already mentioned, than to suffer matters to remain as they are, unsettled."—*Washington to Edmund Randolph*, 22 July, 1795. This is the opinion that has finally come to prevail. "The treaty as a whole was not a very brilliant one for the United States, but its treatment was far worse than its deserts. * * * No body, not even its supporters, liked it, and yet it may be doubted whether anything materially better was possible at the time. * * * The treaty, in reality, was by no means bad; on the contrary, it had many good points."—Lodge, *George Washington*, ii., 180.

me to do what propriety, and the true interest of this country shall appear to require at my hands, on so important a subject, under such delicate circumstances.

You will be at no loss to perceive from what I have already said, that my wishes are to have the favorable and unfavorable side of each article stated and compared together; that I may see the bearing and tendency of them;—and ultimately, on which side the balance is to be found.

This treaty has, I am sensible, many relations, which, in deciding thereon ought to be attended to;—some of them too are of an important nature. —I know also, that to judge with precision of its commercial arrangements, there ought likewise to be an intimate acquaintance with the various branches of commerce between this country and Great Britain as it *now* stands;—as it will be placed by the treaty,—and as it may affect our present, or restrain our future treaties with other nations.—All these things I am persuaded you have given as much attention to as most men; and I believe that your late employment under the General government afforded you more opportunities of deriving knowledge therein, than most of them who have not studied and practiced it scientifically, upon a large and comprehensive scale.

I do not know how you may be occupied at present;—or how incompatible this request of mine may be to the business you have in hand. All I can say is, that however desirous I may be of availing myself of your sentiments on the points I have enu-

merated, and such others as are involved in the treaty, and the resolution of the Senate; (both of which I send you, lest they should not be at hand) it is not my intention to interrupt you in that business; or, if you are disinclined to go into the investigation I have requested, to press the matter upon you: for of this you may be assured, that with the most unfeigned regard—and with every good wish for your health and prosperity

I am, Your Affectc. friend &c

P. S. Admitting that his B: Majesty will consent to the suspension of the 12th Article of the treaty, is it necessary that the treaty should again go to the Senate? or is the President authorized by the resolution of that body to ratify it without.[1]

TO EZEKIEL PRICE, THOMAS WALLEY, WILLIAM BOARDMAN, EBENEZER SEAVER, THOMAS CRAFTS, THOMAS EDWARDS, WILLIAM LITTLE, WILLIAM SCOLLAY, AND JESSE PUTNAM, SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF BOSTON [2]

UNITED STATES, 28 July, 1795.

GENTLEMEN,

In every act of my administration, I have sought

[1] For Hamilton's reply, see his *Works* (Lodge's edition), iv., 322.

[2] The resolutions to which this letter is a reply are one of the most complete as well as one of the most temperate statements of the objections to the Jay treaty. Their full text is as follows:

Resolved, As the sense of the Inhabitants of this Town, that the aforesaid *Instrument*, if Ratified, will be highly Injurious to

the happiness of my fellow citizens. My system for the attainment of this object has uniformly been to overlook all personal, local, and partial considerations; to contemplate the United States as one great whole; to confide, that sudden impressions,

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the commercial interests of the United States, derogatory to their National Honour, and Independence, and may be dangerous to the Peace & Happiness of their Citizens. The reasons which have induced this opinion are as follows, vizt:

1st. Because, This Compact professes to have no referrence to the Merits of the Complaints and pretensions of the contracting parties; but in reality the complaints and pretensions of Great Britain are *fully* provided for, while a part only of those of the United States have been brought into Consideration.—

2dly. Because, in the stipulation which restores *our* Posts on the Western Frontier, no provision is made to indemnify the United states for the Commercial, and other Losses they have sustained, and the heavy expences to which they have been subjected in consequence of being kept out of possession, for twelve Years, in direct violation of the Treaty of Peace.——

3dly. Because, no indemnification is to be made to the Citizens of the United States, for property taken from them at the close of the War, the restitution of which is provided for in the same Treaty.

4thly. Because, the Capture of Vessels and property of Citizens of the United States during the present War, made under the Authority of the Government of Great Britain, is a National Concern, and claims arising from such Captures ought not to have been submitted to the decision of their admiralty Courts as the United States are thereby precluded from having a voice in the final determination of such cases.—Because, the Indemnification proposed, is to be sought by a Process tedious and expensive, in which justice may be *delayed* to an unreasonable time, and eventually lost to many of the sufferers from their inability to pursue it; and because this mode of Indemnification bears no proportion to the *summary* method adopted for the satisfaction of British claims.

5thly. Because, this compact admits British subjects to an equal participation with our own citizens of the interior traffic of the United States with the neighbouring Indians, thro' our whole territorial dominions; while the advantages ostensibly re-

when erroneous, would yield to candid reflection; and to consult only the substantial and permanent interests of our country.

Nor have I departed from this line of conduct, on the occasion which has produced the resolutions contained in your letter of the 13th instant.

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ciprocated to our citizens are limited both in their nature and extent.

6thly. Because, the alien duty upon merchandize imported into the United States by British subjects in their own Bottoms is, if not wholly suspended, at least contracted, not to be increased.—

7thly. Because, the Commerce the United States have hitherto enjoyed in India, *in common with other Nations*, is so restricted that in future it will be of little, or no substantial benefit to our own Citizens.—

8thly. Because, in every stipulation respecting our intercourse with the *Colonial* possessions of Great Britain, the whole commerce of the United States in such intercourse, is *colonized* in return.—

9thly. Because, the clause by which the British Government reserves to itself the right of imposing on American Vessels, entering British ports in Europe, a Duty which shall countervail the difference of the Duty payable on the importation of European and Asiatic goods into the United States in British or American bottoms, places it in the power of *that* Government to enable British subjects to become the importers of Asiatic and European Goods into the United states to the exclusion of *our own* Citizens.

10thly. Because, altho' the terms of said Treaty purport to be reciprocal in many instances, yet from the local situation and existing circumstances of the United states, and the Pacific system of policy they have adopted, the reciprocity is merely nominal and delusive.

11thly. Because, it prevents the United States from imposing any further restrictions on the British trade alone, and because it is stipulated that neither the debts due from Individuals of the one Nation to Individuals of the other, nor shares, nor monies which they may have in the public funds, or in any public or private Banks, shall *ever* in any event of war, or national difference, be sequestered or confiscated,—as it

Without a predilection for my own judgment, I have weighed with attention every argument, which has at any time been brought into view. But the constitution is the guide, which I never can abandon. It has assigned to the President the power of making treaties, with the advice and consent of

is far from being impossible that the exercise of this right may in the opinion of the Legislature of the United states, contribute to preserve the peace of our Country, and protect the rights and property of the citizens from violation, we therefore esteem it highly impolitic that the public faith should be pledged that *it* shall *never* be exercised under any circumstances whatever.—

12thly. Because, it concedes a Right to the British Government, to search and detain our Vessels in time of war between them and other Nations, under frivolous and vexatious pretexts.

13thly. Because, it provides that Ship timber, Tar, Hemp, Sails, and Copper, shall be considered contraband of War, which articles are expressly stipulated to be free by the Treaties already subsisting between the United States and all other Nations with whom they are in compact.

14thly. Because, it surrenders all or most of the Benefits of a Commercial nature which we had a right to expect from our Neutrality in the present European War.

15thly. Because, it precludes the hope of receiving any advantage from the modern Law of nations referred to in the PRESIDENTS Proclamation of Neutrality; adopted by most of the Nations of Europe in the last War, and to which we *then* acceded, and have secured in our Treaties with all other Nations.

16thly. Because, it not only surrenders the right of carrying the property of any Nation at War with Great Britain in our Vessels freely, but abandons all pretensions even to the freight.

17thly. Because, it permits the British nation to convert provisions destined to other Nations at War with them, to their own use, on payment of what *they* may deem reasonable profit; a measure, not only injurious to the interest of the American Merchant, but which will prevent our citizens from carrying American productions to other Countries, which, by the Laws of Nature and Nations they have a right to do without molestation.

18thly. Because, it limits the Power of Congress delegated

the Senate. It was doubtless supposed that these two branches of government would combine, without passion, and with the best means of information, those facts and principles upon which the success of our foreign relations will always depend; that they ought not to substitute for their own conviction the opinions of others, or to seek truth through any channel but that of a temperate and well-informed investigation.

Under this persuasion, I have resolved on the manner of executing the duty before me. To the high responsibility attached to it, I freely submit; and you, Gentlemen, are at liberty to make these sentiments known as the grounds of my procedure. While I feel the most lively gratitude for the many

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to them by the Constitution,—"to regulate our Commerce with foreign Nations,"—by prescribing conditions, and creating impediments to the exercise of that Power.

19thly. Because, it exposes the United States and their Commerce to similiar embarrassments from other Commercial nations, all of whom [will] *probably* regulate our trade by this partial standard.—and Lastly,—Because, in the opinion of the Inhabitants of this town, the Nature and Extent of the Exports of the United States are *such*, that in all their stipulations with foreign Nations, they have it in their power to secure a perfect reciprocity of intercourse not only with the home Dominions of such Nations, but with all their colonial dependencies.—

It is further *Resolved*, that a Copy of the foregoing Proceedings, attested by the Town Clerk, be immediately transmitted to the PRESIDENT of the United States, that they may be respectfully submitted to his consideration.—And we earnestly hope, and confidently rely, that his Prudence, Fortitude and Wisdom which have more than once been eminestly instrumental in the salvation of his Country, will be equally conspicuous on the present occasion, and that the Reasons we have assigned, will have their influence to induce him to withhold his signature from the Ratification of this alarming Instrument.—*Boston Records*, xxxi., 407-410.

instances of approbation from my country, I can no otherwise deserve it, than by obeying the dictates of my conscience. With due respect, I am, Gentlemen, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON

[PRIVATE]

MOUNT VERNON, 29 July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letters of the 20th and 21st Instt. found me at this place, after a hot and disagreeable ride.

As the measures of the government respecting the treaty were taken before I left Philadelphia, something more imperious than has yet appeared, must turn up to occasion a change.—Still, it is very desirable to ascertain, if possible, after the paroxysm of the fever is a little abated, what the real temper of the people is, concerning it; for at present the cry against the Treaty is like that against a mad-dog; and every one, in a manner, seems engaged in running it down.—

That it has received the most tortured interpretation, and that the writings against it (which are very industriously circulated) are pregnant of the most abominable mis-representations, admits of no doubt;—yet, there are to be found, so far as my information extends, many well disposed men who conceive, that in the settlement of *old* disputes, a proper regard to reciprocal justice does not appear in the Treaty; whilst others, also well enough affected to the government, are of opinion that to

have had *no* commercial treaty would have been better, for this country than the restricted one, agreed to; in as much, say they, the nature of our Exports and imports (without any extra, or violent measures) would have forced or led to a more adequate intercourse between the two nations without any of those shackles which the treaty has imposed. In a word, that as our *exports* consist chiefly of *provisions* and *raw materials,* which to the manufacturers in G. Britain, and to their Islands in the West Indies, affords employment and food; they must have had them on *our* terms, if they were not to be obtained on their *own;* whilst the *imports* of this country, offers the best mart for their fabrics; and of course, is the principal support of their manufacturers; but the string which is most played on, because it strikes with most force the popular ear, is the violation, as they term it, of our engagements with France; or in other words the predilection shown by that instrument to G. Britain at the expence of the French nation.

The consequences of which are more to be apprehended than any, which are likely to flow from other causes, as ground of opposition; because, whether the fact is, in *any* degree true or not, it is the interest of the French (whilst the animosity, or jealousies between the two nations exist) to avail themselves of such a spirit to keep *us* and *G. Britain* at variance; and they will in my opinion accordingly do it.—To what length their policy may induce them to carry matters, is too much in embryo at this moment to decide:—but I predict

much embarrassment to the government therefrom —and in my opinion, too much pains cannot be taken by those who speak, or write, in favor of the treaty, to place this matter in its true light.—

I have seen with pleasure, that a writer in one of the New York papers under the signature of Camillus, has promised to answer,—or rather to defend the treaty—which has been made with G. Britain.[1]—To judge of this work from the first number, which I have seen, I auger well of the performance and shall expect to see the subject handled in a clear, distinct and satisfactory manner:—but if measures are not adopted for its dissemination a few only will derive lights from the knowledge or labor of the author; whilst the opposition pieces will spread their poison in all directions; and Congress, more than probable, will assemble with the unfavorable impressions of their constituents. The difference of conduct between the friends and foes of order and good government, is in nothing more striking than that the latter are always working like bees, to distil their poison; whilst the former, depending often times *too much* and *too long* upon the sense and good dispositions of the people to work conviction, neglect the means of effecting it.

With sincere esteem & regard

I am, your Affecte.

[1] *Camillus* was Hamilton himself. His papers under this signature may be found in his *Works* (Lodge's edition), volumes iv. and v.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, SECRETARY OF STATE

[PRIVATE]

MOUNT VERNON, 29 July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * I view the opposition, which the treaty is receiving from the meetings in different parts of the Union, in a very serious light; not because there is *more* weight in *any* of the objections, which are made to it, than was foreseen at first, for there are *none* in *some* of them, and *gross misrepresentations* in *others;* nor as it respects myself personally, for this shall have no influence on my conduct, plainly perceiving, and I am accordingly preparing my mind for it, the obloquy which disappointment and malice are collecting to heap upon me. But I am alarmed on account of the effect it may have on, and the advantage the French government may be disposed to make of, the spirit which is at work to cherish a belief in them, that the treaty is calculated to favor Great Britain at their expense. Whether they believe or disbelieve these tales, the effect it will have upon the nation will be nearly the same; for, whilst they are at war with that power, or so long as the animosity between the two nations exists, it will, no matter at whose expense, be their policy, and it is to be feared will be their conduct to prevent us from being on good terms with Great Britain, or from her deriving any advantages from our trade, which they can hinder, however much we may be benefited thereby our-

selves. To what length this policy and interest may carry them is problematical; but, when they see the people of this country divided, and such a violent opposition given to the measures of their own government pretendedly in their favor, it may be extremely embarrassing, to say no more of it.

To sum the whole up in a few words, I have never, since I have been in the administration of the government, seen a crisis, which in my judgment has been so pregnant of interesting events, nor one from which more is to be apprehended, whether viewed on one side or the other. From New York there is, and I am told will further be, a counter current; but how formidable it may appear, I know not. If the same does not take place at Boston and other towns, it will afford but too strong evidence, that the opposition is in a manner universal, and would make the ratification a very serious business indeed. But, as it respects the French, counter resolutions, even would, for the reasons I have already mentioned, do little more than weaken, in a small degree, the effect the other side would have. * * *

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, SECRETARY OF STATE

[PRIVATE]

MOUNT VERNON, 31 July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * To be wise and temperate, as well as firm, the present crisis most eminently calls for. There is too much reason to believe, from the pains

which have been taken before, at, and since the advice of the Senate respecting the treaty, that the prejudices against it are more extensive than is generally imagined. This I have lately understood to be the case in this quarter, from men, who are of no party, but well-disposed to the present administration. How should it be otherwise, when no stone has been left unturned, that could impress on the minds of the people the most arrant misrepresentation of facts; that their rights have not only been *neglected,* but absolutely *sold;* that there are no reciprocal advantages in the treaty; that the benefits are all on the side of Great Britain; and, what seems to have had more weight with them than all the rest, and most pressed, that the treaty is made with the design to oppress the French, in open violation of our treaty with that nation, and contrary, too, to every principle of gratitude and sound policy? In time, when passion shall have yielded to sober reason, the current may possibly turn; but, in the mean while, this government in relation to France and England may be compared to a ship between the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis. If the treaty is ratified, the partisans of the French, (or rather of war and confusion,) will excite them to hostile measures, or at least to unfriendly sentiments; if it is not, there is no foreseeing *all* the consequences, which may follow, as it respects Great Britain.

It is not to be inferred from hence, that I am or shall be disposed to quit the ground I have taken, unless circumstances more imperious than have yet

come to my knowledge should compel it; for there is but one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily. But these things are mentioned to show, that a close investigation of the subject is more than ever necessary, and that they are strong evidences of the necessity of the most circumspect conduct in carrying the determination of government into effect, with prudence as it respects our own people, and with every exertion to produce a change for the better from Great Britain. * * *

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS [1]

PHILADELPHIA, 22 December, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am become so unprofitable a correspondent, and so remiss in my correspondencies, that nothing but the kindness of my friends, in overlooking these deficiencies, could induce them to favor me with a continuance of their letters; which to me are at once pleasing, interesting, and useful. To a man immersed in debt, and seeing no prospect of extrication but by an act of insolvency (perhaps absolvency would be a better word), I compare myself; and like him, too, afraid to examine the items of the account, I will at once make a lumping acknowledgment of the receipt of many interesting private letters from you, previous to your

[1] This letter fell into the hands of the French Directory, to whom, according to the American minister in Paris, James Monroe, it gave offence. For Washington's reply to Monroe, see, *post*, page 421.

last arrival in England, and will begin with those subsequent thereto of the 3d of July and 22d of August.

As the British government has repealed the order for seizing our provision vessels, little more need be said on that head, than that it was the *principle,* which constituted the most obnoxious and exceptionable part thereof, and the predicament in which this country was thereby placed in her relations with France. Admitting, therefore, that the compensation to *some* individuals was adequate to what it might have been in another quarter, yet the exceptions to it on these grounds remained the same.

I do not think Colonel Innes's report to the governor of Kentucky was entirely free from exceptions. But let the report be accompanied with the following remarks. 1, that the one, which Lord Grenville might have seen published, was disclaimed by Colonel Innes, as soon as it appeared in the public gazettes, on account of its incorrectness. 2, an irritable spirit at that time pervaded all our people at the westward, arising from a combination of causes (but from none more powerful, than the analogous proceedings of Great Britain in the north, with those of Spain in the south, towards the United States and their Indian borderers), which spirit required some management and soothing. But, 3d and principally, Lord Grenville if he had adverted to the many remonstrances, which have gone from this country against the conduct of his own, which I will take the liberty to

say has been as impolitic for their nation, (if peace and a good understanding with this was its object,) as it has been irritating to us. And, that it may not be conceived I am speaking at random, let his Lordship be asked, if we have not complained,—That some of their naval officers have insulted and menaced us in *our own ports?* That they have violated our national rights, by searching vessels and impressing seamen within our acknowledged jurisdiction, and in an outrageous manner have seized the latter by *entire crews* in the West Indies, and done the like, but not so extensively, in all parts of the world? That the Bermudian privateers, or to speak more correctly, pirates, and the admiralty court of that island, have committed the most atrocious depredations and violences on our commerce, in capturing, and in their adjudications afterwards, as were never tolerated in any well-organized or efficient government? That their governor of Upper Canada has ordered in an official and formal manner settlers within our own territory, (and far removed from the posts they have withheld from us,) to withdraw, and forbid others to settle on the same? That the persons, to whom their Indian affairs are intrusted, have taken unwearied pains and practised every deception to keep those people in a state of irritation and disquietude with us; and, to the *latest* moment, exerted every nerve to prevent the treaty, which has lately been concluded between the United States and them from taking effect?

These complaints were not founded in vague

and idle reports, but on indubitable facts; facts, not only known to the government, but so notorious as to be known to the people also, who charge to the last item of the above enumeration the expenditure of a million or more of dollars annually for the purpose of self-defence against Indian tribes thus stimulated, and for chastising them for the ravages and cruel murders, which they had committed on our frontier inhabitants. Our minister at the court of London has been directed to remonstrate against these things with force and energy. The answer, it is true, has been (particularly with respect to the interferences with the Indians) a disavowal. Why then are not the agents of such unauthorized, offensive, and injurious measures made examples of? For wherein, let me ask, consists the difference to *us* between their being the acts of government, or the acts of unauthorized officers or agents of the government, if we are to sustain all the evils, which flow from such measures?

To this catalogue may be added the indifference, nay, more than indifference, with which the government of Great Britain received the advances of this country towards a friendly intercourse with it, even after the adoption of the present constitution, and since the operation of the government; and, also, the ungracious and obnoxious characters, (rancorous refugees, as if done with design to insult the country,) which they have sent among us as their agents, who, retaining all their former enmity, could see nothing through a proper medium, and

becoming the earwigs of their minister (who, by the by, does not possess a mind capacious enough, or a temper sufficiently conciliatory, to view things and act upon a great and liberal scale), were always laboring under some unfavorable information and impression, and probably not communicating them in a less exceptionable manner than they received or conceived them themselves.

I give you these details (and, if you should again converse with Lord Grenville on the subject you are at liberty, unofficially to mention them, or any of them, according to circumstances), as evidences of the impolitic conduct (for so it strikes me) of the British government towards these United States; that it may be seen how difficult it has been for the executive, under such an accumulation of irritating circumstances, to maintain the ground of neutrality, which had been taken; at a time when the remembrance of the aid we had received from France in the revolution was fresh in every mind, and when the partisans of that country were continually contrasting the affections of *that* people with the unfriendly disposition of the *British government.* And that, too, as I have observed before, while the recollection of *their own* sufferings during the war with the latter had not been forgotten.

It is well known, that peace (to borrow a modern phrase) has been the order of the day with me since the disturbances in Europe first commenced. My policy has been, and will continue to be, while I have the honor to remain in the administration of

the government, to be upon friendly terms with, but independent of, all the nations of the earth; to share in the broils of none; to fulfil our own engagements; to supply the wants and be carrier for them all; being thoroughly convinced, that it is our policy and interest to do so. Nothing short of self-respect, and that justice which is essential to a national character, ought to involve us in war; for sure I am, if this country is preserved in tranquillity twenty years longer, it may bid defiance in a just cause to any power whatever; such in that time will be its population, wealth, and resources.

If Lord Grenville conceives, that the United States are not well disposed towards Great Britain, his candor, I am persuaded, will seek for the causes, and his researches will fix them, as I have done. If this should be the case, his policy will I am persuaded be opposed to the continuance or renewal of the irritating measures, which I have enumerated; for he may be assured, (though the assurance will not, it is probable, carry conviction with it from me to a member of the British administration,) that a liberal policy will be one of the most effectual means of deriving advantages to their trade and manufactures from the people of the United States, and will contribute, more than any thing else, to obliterate the impressions, which have been made by their late conduct towards us.

In a government as free as ours, where the people are at liberty, and will express their sentiments oftentimes imprudently, and, for want of information, sometimes unjustly, allowances must be made

for occasional effervescences; but, after the declaration which I have here made of my political creed, you can run no hazard in asserting, that the executive branch of this government never has, or will suffer, while I preside, any improper conduct of its officers to escape with impunity, or will give its sanctions to any disorderly proceedings of its citizens.

By a firm adherence to these principles, and to the neutral policy which has been adopted, I have brought on myself a torrent of abuse in the factious papers in this country, and from the enmity of the discontented of all descriptions therein. But, having no sinister objects in view, I shall not be diverted from my course by these, nor any attempts which are, or shall be made to withdraw the confidence of my constituents from me. I have nothing to ask; and, discharging my duty, I have nothing to fear from invective. The acts of my administration will appear when I am no more, and the intelligent and candid part of mankind will not condemn my conduct without recurring to them.

The treaty entered into with Great Britain has, as you have been informed, undergone much and severe animadversion; and, though a more favorable one were to have been wished, which the policy perhaps of Great Britain might have granted, yet the demerits thereof are not to be estimated by the opposition it has received; nor is the opposition sanctioned by the great body of the yeomanry in these States. For they, whatever their opinions of

it may be, are disposed to leave the decision where the constitution has placed it. But an occasion was wanting, and the instrument, by those who required it, was deemed well calculated, for the purpose of working upon the affections of the people of this country towards those of France, whose interests and rights under our treaty with them they represented as being violated; and, with the aid of the provision order, and other irritating conduct of the British ships of war and agents, as mentioned before, the means were furnished, and more pains taken, than upon any former occasion, to raise a general ferment with a view to defeat the treaty.

But knowing that you have other correspondents, who have more leisure, and equally capable of detailing these matters, I will leave you to them and the gazettes for fuller information there and a more minute account of the prevailing politics. And thanking you for the interesting intelligence and opinions contained in your letter of the 22d of August, I shall only add, that, with sincere esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend. * * *

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2. The Treaty-making Power

TO THE SECRETARIES OF STATE, THE TREASURY, WAR, AND THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

PHILADELPHIA, 25 March, 1796.

SIR,

The resolution moved in the House of Represen-

tatives, for the papers relative to the negotiation of the treaty with Great Britain, having passed in the affirmative, I request your opinion,

1. Whether that branch of Congress has or has not a right, by the constitution, to call for those papers?

2. Whether (if it does not possess the right, it would be expedient under the circumstances of this particular case to furnish them?

3. And, in either case, in what terms would it be most proper to comply with, or to refuse, the request of the House?

These opinions in writing, and your attendance, will be expected at ten o'clock to-morrow. I am, &c.[1]

[1] For the execution of the treaty negotiated by John Jay with Great Britain, certain appropriations, which could be made only by both Houses of Congress, were necessary. After the treaty had been ratified by the Senate, Washington, without awaiting the action of the House of Representatives, promulgated it as a part of the law of the land. The House, incensed by this, then adopted, by a vote of sixty-two to thirty-seven, the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to lay before this House a copy of the instructions to the Minister of the United States, who negotiated the Treaty with the King of Great Britain, communicated by his Message of the first of March, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to the said Treaty; excepting such of said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed."—*Annals of Congress, 4th Congress, 1st Session*, 759.

Washington then asked the members of his cabinet for their advice, and they were unanimously of the opinion that the request of the House should be refused.

MESSAGE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 30th, 1796.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

With the utmost attention I have considered your resolution of the 24th instant, requesting me to lay before your House a copy of the instructions to the minister of the United States, who negotiated the treaty with the King of Great Britain, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to that treaty, excepting such of the said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed.

In deliberating upon this subject, it was impossible for me to lose sight of the principle, which some have avowed in its discussion, or to avoid extending my views to the consequences, which must flow from the admission of that principle.

I trust that no part of my conduct has ever indicated a disposition to withhold any information which the constitution has enjoined upon the President as a duty to give, or which could be required of him by either House of Congress as a right; and with truth I affirm, that it has been, as it will continue to be while I have the honor to preside in the government, my constant endeavor to harmonize with the other branches thereof, so far as the trust delegated to me by the people of the United States, and my sense of the obligation it imposes to "preserve, protect, and defend the constitution," will permit.

The nature of foreign negotiations requires

caution, and their success must often depend on secrecy; and, even when brought to a conclusion, a full disclosure of all the measures, demands, or eventual concessions which may have been proposed or contemplated, would be extremely impolitic; for this might have a pernicious influence on future negotiations, or produce immediate inconveniences, perhaps danger and mischief, in relation to other powers. The necessity of such caution and secrecy was one cogent reason for vesting the power of making treaties in the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate; the principle on which that body was formed confining it to a small number of members. To admit, then, a right in the House of Representatives to demand, and to have, as a matter of course, all the papers respecting a negotiation with a foreign power, would be to establish a dangerous precedent.

It does not occur, that the inspection of the papers asked for can be relative to any purpose under the cognizance of the House of Representatives, except that of an impeachment, which the resolution has not expressed. I repeat, that I have no disposition to withhold any information which the duty of my station will permit, or the public good shall require, to be disclosed; and, in fact, all the papers affecting the negotiation with Great Britain, were laid before the Senate, when the treaty itself was communicated for their consideration and advice.

The course, which the debate has taken on the resolution of the House, leads to some observations

on the mode of making treaties under the constitution of the United States.

Having been a member of the general convention, and knowing the principles on which the constitution was formed, I have ever entertained but one opinion on this subject; and, from the first establishment of the government to this moment, my conduct has exemplified that opinion, that the power of making treaties is exclusively vested in the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and that every treaty, so made and promulgated, thenceforward became the law of the land. It is thus that the treaty-making power has been understood by foreign nations; and, in all the treaties made with them, we have declared, and they have believed, that, when ratified by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, they became obligatory. In this construction of the constitution, every House of Representatives has heretofore acquiesced; and, until the present time, not a doubt or suspicion has appeared, to my knowledge, that this construction was not the true one. Nay, they have more than acquiesced; for till now, without controverting the obligation of such treaties, they have made all the requisite provisions for carrying them into effect.

There is also reason to believe that this construction agrees with the opinions entertained by the State conventions, when they were deliberating on the constitution; especially by those who objected to it, because there was not required, in *commercial*

treaties, the consent of two thirds of the whole number of the members of the Senate, instead of two thirds of the Senators present; and because, in treaties respecting territorial and certain other rights and claims, the concurrence of three fourths of the whole number of both Houses respectively was not made necessary.

It is a fact declared by the general convention, and universally understood, that the constitution of the United States was the result of a spirit of amity and mutual concession. And it is well known, that, under this influence, the smaller States were admitted to an equal representation in the Senate with the larger States, and that this branch of the government was invested with great powers; for on the equal participation of those powers the sovereignty and political safety of the smaller States were deemed essentially to depend.

If other proofs than these, and the plain letter of the constitution itself, be necessary to ascertain the point under consideration, they may be found in the journals of the general convention, which I have deposited in the office of the Department of State. In those journals it will appear, that a proposition was made, "that no treaty should be binding on the United States, which was not ratified by a law"; and that the proposition was explicitly rejected.

As, therefore, it is perfectly clear to my understanding, that the assent of the House of Representatives is not necessary to the validity of a treaty; as the treaty with Great Britain exhibits, in

itself, all the objects requiring legislative provision, and on these the papers called for can throw no light; and as it is essential to the due administration of the government, that the boundaries, fixed by the constitution between the different departments, should be preserved; a just regard to the constitution and to the duty of my office, under all the circumstances of this case, forbids a compliance with your request.[1]

[1] Washington's message occasioned a long discussion in the House of Representatives, which resulted in the adoption of the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That it being declared by the second section of the second article of the Constitution, 'that the President shall have power, by and with the advice [and consent] of the Senate to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senate [Senators] present concur,' the House of Representatives do not claim any agency in making Treaties; but, that when a Treaty stipulates regulations on any of the subjects submitted by the Constitution to the power of Congress, it must depend, for its execution, as to such stipulations, on a law or laws to be passed by Congress, and it is the Constitutional right and duty of the House of Representatives, in all such cases, to deliberate on the expediency or inexpediency of carrying such Treaty into effect and to determine and act thereon, as, in their judgment, may be most conducive to the public good.

"*Resolved*, That it is not necessary to the propriety of any application from this House to the Executive, for information desired by them, and which may relate to any Constitutional functions of the House, that the purpose for which such information may be wanted, or to which the same may be applied, should be stated in the application."—*Annals of Congress, 4th Congress, 1st Session*, 771.

After the adoption of these resolutions, a long debate ensued as to whether the House would give its consent to the legislation necessary for carrying the treaty into effect. Finally, on April 30, 1796, by a vote of 51 to 48, the House ordered the preparation of the necessary measures. Since that time a number of treaties have been negotiated by the President and ratified by the Senate which could not be put into effect until supplemen-

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON

[PRIVATE]

PHILADELPHIA, 31 March, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

I do not know how to thank you sufficiently, for the trouble you have taken to dilate on the request of the House of Representatives for the papers relative to the British Treaty,[1] or how to apologize for the trouble, (much greater than I had any idea

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tary legislation had received the sanction of the House. There is no instance of refusal on the part of the House to consent to the necessary measures, but it has frequently asserted its right to refuse. The whole subject was fully discussed in connection with the bill making an appropriation for carrying out the treaty for the annexation of Alaska. See particularly the speeches of N. P. Banks, C. C. Washburn, B. F. Butler, Thaddeus Stevens, and G. S. Orth, in *The Congressional Globe, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix*, pp. 385, 393, 400, 421, 429. The relation of the House to the treaty-making power is still a subject of controversy, and no more conclusive statement concerning it can be made than that of the eminent jurist, Chief Justice Cooley:

"The full treaty-making power is in the President and Senate; but the House of Representatives has a restraining power upon it in that it may in its discretion at any time refuse to give assent to legislation necessary to give a treaty effect. Many treaties need no such legislation; but when moneys are to be paid by the United States, they can be appropriated by Congress alone; and in some other cases laws are needful. An unconstitutional or manifestly unwise treaty the House of Representatives may possibly refuse to aid; and this, when legislation is needful, would be equivalent to a refusal of the government, through one of its branches, to carry the treaty into effect. This would be an extreme measure, but it is conceivable that a case might arise in which a resort to it would be justified."—Cooley, *Principles of Constitutional Law*, 175.

[1] For Hamilton's draft of a message to Congress refusing to comply with the request of the House for the papers relating to the Jay Treaty, see his *Works* (Lodge's edition), vii., 118.

of giving,) which you have taken to show the impropriety of that request.

From the first moment, and from the fullest conviction in my own mind, I had resolved to *resist the principle,* which was evidently intended to be established by the call of the Ho. of Representatives; and only deliberated on the manner in which this could be done with the least bad consequences.

To effect this, three modes presented themselves to me. 1st, a denial of the Papers in *toto,* assigning concise but cogent reasons for that denial; 2d, to grant them in whole; or, 3d, in part; accompanied with a pointed protest against the right of the House to controul treaties, or to call for Papers without specifying their object, and against the compliance being drawn into precedent.

I had as little hesitation in deciding, that the first was the most tenable ground; but, from the peculiar circumstances of *this case,* it merited consideration, if the principle could be saved, whether facility in the provisions might not result from a compliance. An attentive examination, however, of the Papers and the subject, soon convinced me that to furnish *all* the Papers would be highly improper, and that a *partial* delivery of them would leave the door open for as much calumny as the entire refusal—perhaps more so—as it might, and I have no doubt would be said, that all such as were essential to the purpose of the House were withheld.

Under these Impressions I proceeded, with the Heads of Departments and the Attorney-Gen. to

collect materials and to prepare an answer, subject however, to alteration and revision, according to circumstances. This answer was ready on Monday, and proposed to be sent in on Tuesday; but it was delayed until I should receive what was expected; not doing it definitely on that day, the delivery of my answer was further postponed till the next, notwithstanding the anxious solicitude, which was visible in all quarters to learn the result of Executive decision.

Finding that the draft, I had prepared, embraced most if not all the principles, which were detailed in the paper I received yesterday, though not the reasonings; that it would take considerable time to copy the latter; and, above all, having understood, that, if the papers were refused, a fresh demand with strictures might be expected, I sent in the answer which was ready, reserving the other as a source for reasoning, if my information proves true.

I could not be satisfied without giving you this concise account of the business, to express again my sincere thanks for the pains you have been at to investigate the subject, and to assure you, over and over, of the warmth of my friendship, and of the affectionate regard, with which I am, &c.

TO EDWARD CARRINGTON

[PRIVATE]

PHILADELPHIA, 1 May, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

* * * Whatever my own opinion may be on

this or any other subject interesting to the community at large, it always has been and will continue to be my earnest desire to learn, and, as far as is consistent, to comply with, the public sentiment; but it is on *great* occasions *only,* and after time has been given for cool and deliberate reflection, that the *real* voice of the people can be known.

The present, however, is one of those great occasions, than which none more important has occurred, or probably may occur again to call forth their decision; and to them the appeal is now made. For no candid man in the least degree acquainted with the progress of this business will believe for a moment, that the *ostensible* dispute was about papers, or whether the British treaty was a good one or a bad one, but whether there should be a treaty at all without the concurrence of the House of Representatives, which was striking at once, and that boldly, too, at the fundamental principles of the constitution; and, if it were established, would render the treaty-making power, not only a nullity, but such an absolute absurdity as to reflect disgrace on the framers of it. For will any one suppose, that they who framed, or those who adopted, that instrument ever intended to give the power to the President and Senate to make treaties, and, declaring that when made and ratified they should be the supreme law of the land, would in the same breath place it in the powers of the House of Representatives to fix their vote on them; unless apparent marks of fraud or corruption (which in equity would set aside any contract) ac-

companied the measure, or such striking evidence of national injury attended their adoption, as to make a war or any other evil preferable? Every unbiassed mind will answer in the negative. * * *

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3. Neutrality

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, SECRETARY OF STATE.

Mount Vernon, 12 April, 1793.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 7th was brought to me by the last post. War having actually commenced between France and Great Britain, it behooves the government of this country to use every means in its power to prevent the citizens thereof from embroiling us with either of those powers, by endeavoring to maintain a strict neutrality. I therefore require, that you will give the subject mature consideration, that such measures as shall be deemed most likely to effect this desirable purpose may be adopted without delay; for I have understood, that vessels are already designated privateers, and are preparing accordingly.

Such other measures as may be necessary for us to pursue against events, which it may not be in our power to avoid or control, you will also think of, and lay them before me at my arrival in Philadelphia; for which place I shall set out to-morrow, but will leave it to the advices, which I may receive to-night by the post, to determine whether it is to be by the most direct route, or by the one I pro-

posed to have come, that is, by Reading, the canals between the rivers of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, Carlisle, &c., &c. With very great esteem and regard, I am, &c.[1]

TO THE SECRETARIES AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

[CIRCULAR]

PHILADELPHIA, 18 April, 1793.

The posture of affairs in Europe, particularly between France and Great Britain, places the United States in a delicate situation, and requires much consideration, of the measures which will be proper for them to observe in the war between those powers. With a view to forming a general plan of conduct for the executive, I have stated and enclosed sundry questions, to be considered preparatory to a meeting at my house to-morrow, where I shall expect to see you at 9 o'clock, and to receive the result of your reflections thereon. I am, &c.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PRESIDENT.

PHILADELPHIA, 18 April, 1793.

I. Shall a proclamation issue for the purpose of preventing interferences of the citizens of the United States in the war between France and

[1] The outbreak of war between Great Britain and France on February 3, 1793, raised at once the question as to what the relations of the United States should be to the belligerent powers. France claimed that by the treaty of alliance made with her in 1778 the United States was bound to assist her. Many Americans admitted this claim, and many others, entirely apart from treaty stipulations, were ready to aid the French out of gratitude for the aid received from them in the Revolution. At

Great Britain, &c.? Shall it contain a declaration of neutrality or not? What shall it contain?

II. Shall a minister from the Republic of France be received?

III. If received, shall it be absolutely or with qualifications; and, if with qualifications, of what kind?

IV. Are the United States obliged by good faith to consider the treaties heretofore made with France as applying to the present situation of the parties? May they either renounce them, or hold them suspended till the government of France shall be *established?*

V. If they have the right, is it expedient to do either, and which?

VI. If they have an option, would it be a breach of neutrality to consider the treaties still in operation?

VII. If the treaties are to be considered as now in operation, is the guarantee in the treaty of alliance applicable to a defensive war only, or to war either offensive or defensive?

VIII. Does the war in which France is engaged appear to be offensive or defensive on her part? Or of a mixed and equivocal character?

IX. If of a mixed and equivocal character, does the guarantee in any event apply to such a war?

X. What is the effect of a guarantee such as

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that time the motives of French policy in 1778 were not generally understood, and how little claim France had upon the gratitude of America was not realized.

that to be found in the treaty of alliance between the United States and France?

XI. Does any article in either of the treaties prevent ships of war, other than privateers, of the powers opposed to France from coming into the ports of the United States to act as convoys to their own merchantmen? Or does it lay any other restraint upon them more than would apply to the ships of war of France?

XII. Should the future regent of France send a minister to the United States, ought he to be received?

XIII. Is it necessary or advisable to call together the two Houses of Congress, with a view to the present posture of European affairs? If it is, what should be the *particular* object of such a call?[1]

[1] The opinion of the cabinet was thus expressed in a memorandum drawn up by Jefferson:

"At a meeting of the heads of departments and the attorney-general at the President's, April 19th, 1793, to consider the foregoing questions proposed by the President, it was determined by all, on the first question, that a proclamation shall issue forbidding our citizens to take part in any hostilities on the seas, with or against any of the belligerent powers; and warning them against carrying to any such powers any of those articles deemed contraband, according to the modern usage of nations; and enjoining them from all acts and proceedings inconsistent with the duties of a friendly nation towards those at war.

"On the second question, 'Shall a minister from the Republic of France be received?' it was unanimously agreed, that he shall be received.

"The remaining questions were postponed for further consideration."—*Ford.*

On the third question, Jefferson and Randolph were of opinion, that the minister should be received absolutely and without

PROCLAMATION OF NEUTRALITY

WHEREAS it appears, that a state of war exists between Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, Great Britain, and the United Netherlands, on the one part, and France on the other; and the duty and interest of the United States require, that they should with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the belligerent powers;

I have therefore thought fit by these presents to declare the disposition of the United States to ob-

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qualifications. Hamilton and Knox deemed it "advisable, that the reception of the minister expected from the Republic of France should be qualified substantially to this effect:

"That the government of the United States, uniformly entertaining cordial wishes for the happiness of the French nation, and disposed to maintain with it an amicable communication and intercourse, uninterrupted by political vicissitudes, does not hesitate to receive him in the character, which his credentials import; yet, considering the origin, course, and circumstances of the relations continued between the two countries, and the existing position of the affairs of France, it is deemed advisable and proper on the part of the United States to reserve to future consideration and discussion the question, whether the operation of the treaties, by which those relations were formed, ought not to be deemed temporarily and provisionally suspended; and under this impression it is thought due to a spirit of candid and friendly procedure, to apprize him beforehand of the intention to reserve that question, lest silence on the point should occasion misconstruction."

The other questions were elaborately discussed by each member of the cabinet in writing, and the relations between France and the United States, as then existing, were largely examined. —*Sparks.*

The separate opinions submitted by Hamilton and Jefferson to the President may be found in Hamilton, *Works* (Lodge's edition), iv., 74, and in Jefferson, *Writings* (Ford's edition), vi., 217.

serve the conduct aforesaid towards those powers respectively, and to exhort and warn the citizens of the United States carefully to avoid all acts and proceedings whatsoever, which may in any manner tend to contravene such disposition.

And I do hereby also make known, that whosoever of the citizens of the United States shall render himself liable to punishment or forfeiture under the law of nations, by committing, aiding, or abetting hostilities against any of the said powers, or by carrying to any of them those articles, which are deemed contraband by the modern usage of nations, will not receive the protection of the United States against such punishment or forfeiture; and further, that I have given instructions to those officers, to whom it belongs, to cause prosecutions to be instituted against all persons, who shall within the cognizance of the courts of the United States violate the law of nations with respect to the powers at war, or any of them.

In testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed to these presents, and signed the same with my hand. Done at the city of Philadelphia, the 22d day of April, 1793, and of the independence of the United States of America the seventeenth.

RULES ADOPTED BY THE UNITED STATES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ITS NEUTRALITY [1]

4 August, 1793.

1. The original arming and equipping of ves-

[1] "If the heads of departments and the attorney-general, who

sels in the ports of the United States by any of the belligerent parties for military service offensive or defensive is deemed unlawful.

2. Equipments of merchant vessels by either of the belligerent parties, in the ports of the United States, purely for the accommodation of them as such, is deemed lawful.

3. Equipments, in the ports of the United States, of vessels of war in the immediate service of the government of any of the belligerent parties, which, if done to other vessels, would be of a doubtful nature, as being applicable either to commerce or war, are deemed lawful; except those which shall have made prize of the subjects, people, or property of France, coming with their prizes into the ports of the United States, pursuant to the seventeenth article of our treaty of amity and commerce with France.

4. Equipments in the ports of the United States, by any of the parties at war with France, of vessels fitted for merchandise and war, whether with or without commissions, which are doubtful in their nature, as being applicable either to commerce or war, are deemed lawful, except those which shall be made prize, &c.

5. Equipments of any of the vessels of France

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have prepared the eight rules, which you handed to me yesterday, are well satisfied that they are not repugnant to treaties, or to the laws of nations, and moreover are the best we can adopt to maintain neutrality, I not only give them my approbation, but desire they may be made known without delay for the information of all concerned."—*Washington to Jefferson*, 4 August, 1793. Ford's text of these rules (xii., 315) contains serious errors.

in the ports of the United States, which are doubtful in their nature, as being applicable to commerce or war, are deemed lawful.

6. Equipments of every kind, in the ports of the United States, of privateers of the powers at war with France, are deemed unlawful.

7. Equipments of vessels in the ports of the United States, which are of a nature solely adapted to war, are deemed unlawful; except those stranded or wrecked, as mentioned in the eighteenth article of our treaty with France, the sixteenth of our treaty with the United Netherlands, the ninth of our treaty with Prussia; and except those mentioned in the nineteenth article of our treaty with France, the seventeenth of our treaty with the United Netherlands, the eighteenth of our treaty with Prussia.

8. Vessels of either of the parties not armed, or armed previous to their coming into the ports of the United States, which shall not have infringed any of the foregoing rules, may lawfully engage or enlist their own subjects or citizens, not being inhabitants of the United States; except privateers of the powers at war with France, and except those vessels which shall have made prize, &c.

SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, DECEMBER 3, 1793

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

* * * As soon as the war in Europe had em-

braced those powers, with whom the United States have the most extensive relations, there was reason to apprehend, that our intercourse with them might be interrupted, and our disposition for peace drawn into question, by the suspicions too often entertained by belligerent nations. It seemed, therefore, to be my duty to admonish our citizens of the consequences of a contraband trade, and of hostile acts to any of the parties; and to obtain, by a declaration of the existing legal state of things, an easier admission of our right to the immunities belonging to our situation. Under these impressions, the Proclamation, which will be laid before you, was issued.

In this posture of affairs, both new and delicate, I resolved to adopt general rules, which should conform to the treaties and assert the privileges of the United States. These were reduced into a system, which will be communicated to you. Although I have not thought myself at liberty to forbid the sale of the prizes, permitted by our treaty of commerce with France to be brought into our ports, I have not refused to cause them to be restored, when they were taken within the protection of our territory, or by vessels commissioned or equipped in a warlike form within the limits of the United States.

It rests with the wisdom of Congress to correct, improve, or enforce this plan of procedure; and it will probably be found expedient to extend the legal code, and the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States, to many cases, which, though de-

pendent on principles already recognised, demand some further provisions.

Where individuals shall within the United States array themselves in hostility against any of the powers at war; or enter upon military expeditions or enterprises within the jurisdiction of the United States; or usurp and exercise judicial authority within the United States; or where the penalties on violations of the law of nations may have been indistinctly marked, or are inadequate; these offences cannot receive too early and close an attention, and require prompt and decisive remedies.

Whatsoever those remedies may be, they will be well administered by the judiciary, who possess a long-established course of investigation, effectual process, and officers in the habit of executing it. In like manner, as several of the courts have *doubted,* under particular circumstances, their power to liberate the vessels of a nation at peace, and even of a citizen of the United States, although seized under a false color of being hostile property; and have *denied* their power to liberate certain captures within the protection of our territory; it would seem proper to regulate their jurisdiction in these points. But if the executive is to be the resort in either of the two last-mentioned cases, it is hoped, that he will be authorized by law to have facts ascertained by the courts, when, for his own information, he shall request it.

I cannot recommend to your notice measures for the fulfilment of *our* duties to the rest of the world, without again pressing upon you the necessity of

placing ourselves in a condition of complete defence, and of exacting from *them* the fulfilment of *their* duties towards *us*. The United States ought not to indulge a persuasion, that, contrary to the order of human events, they will for ever keep at a distance those painful appeals to arms, with which the history of every other nation abounds. There is a rank due to the United States among nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known, that we are at all times ready for war.[1] * * *

MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

UNITED STATES, 5 December, 1793.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE AND OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

As the present situation of the several nations of Europe, and especially of those with which the United States have important relations, cannot but render the state of things between them and us

[1] "If I wished for a guide in a system of neutrality, I should take that laid down by America in the days of the presidency of Washington, and the secretaryship of Jefferson."—George Canning in the House of Commons, 16 April, 1823. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (N. S.), viii., 1056.

One of the latest English writers on international law says: "The policy of the United States in 1793 constitutes an epoch in the development of the usages of neutrality. There can be no doubt that it was intended and believed to give effect to the obligations then incumbent upon neutrals. But it represented

matter of interesting inquiry to the legislature, and may indeed give rise to deliberations, to which they alone are competent, I have thought it my duty to communicate to them certain correspondences which have taken place.

The representative and executive bodies of France have manifested generally a friendly attachment to this country, have given advantages to our commerce and navigation, and have made overtures for placing these advantages on permanent ground; a decree, however, of the National Assembly, subjecting vessels laden with provisions to be carried into their ports, and making enemy goods lawful prize in the vessel of a friend, contrary to our treaty, though revoked at one time as to the United Sates, has been since extended to their vessels also, as has been recently stated to us. Representations on the subject will be immediately

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by far the most advanced existing opinions as to what these obligations were, and in some points it even went further than authoritative international custom has up to the present time advanced. In the main, however, it is identical with the standard of conduct which is now adopted by the community of nations."—Hall, *A Treatise on International Law*, 594.

An American Secretary of State has written: "It is now plain that the neutrality proclamation of the President was a most wise and necessary act—one of the most important in the history of the country, as it was the inauguration of a principle of international law and governmental practice which has won for us the respect of the world and contributed very materially to our national prosperity. But it was adopted against the advice of many of the most prominent and able of our public men, and subjected the President to bitter abuse and calumny." —Foster, *A Century of American Diplomacy*, 157.

It is not too much to say that Washington is the father of the modern law of neutrality.

given in charge to our minister there, and the result shall be communicated to the legislature.

It is with extreme concern I have to inform you, that the proceedings of the person, whom they have unfortunately appointed their minister plenipotentiary here, have breathed nothing of the friendly spirit of the nation, which sent him; their tendency, on the contrary, has been to involve us in war abroad, and discord and anarchy at home. So far as his acts, or those of his agents, have threatened our immediate commitment in the war, or flagrant insult to the authority of the laws, their effect has been counteracted by the ordinary cognizance of the laws, and by an exertion of the powers confided to me. Where their danger was not imminent, they have been borne with, from sentiments of regard to his nation; from a sense of their friendship towards us; from a conviction, that they would not suffer us to remain long exposed to the action of a person, who has so little respected our mutual dispositions; and, I will add, from a reliance on the firmness of my fellow-citizens in their principles of peace and order.

In the mean time, I have respected and pursued the stipulations of our treaties, according to what I judged their true sense; and have withheld no act of friendship, which their affairs have called for from us, and which justice to others left us free to perform. I have gone further; rather than employ force for the restitution of certain vessels, which I deemed the United States bound to restore, I thought it more advisable to satisfy the

parties, by avowing it to be my opinion, that, if restitution were not made, it would be incumbent on the United States to make compensation. The papers, now communicated, will more particularly apprize you of these transactions.

The vexations and spoliation, understood to have been committed on our vessels and commerce by the cruisers and officers of some of the belligerent powers, appeared to require attention. The proofs of these, however, not having been brought forward, the description of citizens supposed to have suffered were notified, that, on furnishing them to the executive, due measures would be taken to obtain redress of the past, and more effectual provisions against the future. Should such documents be furnished, proper representations will be made thereon, with a just reliance on a redress proportioned to the exigency of the case.

The British government having undertaken, by orders to the commanders of their armed vessels, to restrain, generally, our commerce in corn and other provisions to their own ports and those of their friends, the instructions now communicated were immediately forwarded to our minister at that court. In the mean time, some discussions on the subject took place between him and them. These are also laid before you; and I may expect to learn the result of his special instructions, in time to make it known to the legislature, during their present session.

Very early after the arrival of a British minister here, mutual explanations on the inexecution of the

treaty of peace were entered into with that minister; these are now laid before you for your information.

On the subjects of mutual interest between this country and Spain, negotiations and conferences are now depending. The public good requiring that the present state of these should be made known to the legislature *in confidence only,* they shall be the subject of a separate and subsequent communication.

TO PATRICK HENRY

MOUNT VERNON, 9 October, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

Whatever may be the reception of this letter, truth and candor shall mark its steps. You doubtless know, that the office of State is vacant; and no one can be more sensible, than yourself, of the importance of filling it with a person of abilities, and one in whom the public would have confidence.

It would be uncandid not to inform you, that this office has been offered to others; but it is as true, that it was from a conviction in my own mind, that you would not accept it, (until Tuesday last, in a conversation with General, late Governor, Lee, he dropped sentiments which made it less doubtful,) that it was not offered first to you.

I need scarcely add, that if this appointment could be made to comport with your own inclination, it would be as pleasing to me, as I believe it would be acceptable to the public. With this assurance, and with this belief, I make you the offer

of it. My first wish is, that you would accept it; the next is, that you would be so good as to give me an answer as soon as you conveniently can, as the public business in that department is now suffering for want of a Secretary.

I persuade myself, Sir, it has not escaped your observation, that a crisis is approaching, that must, if it cannot be arrested, soon decide whether order and good government shall be preserved, or anarchy and confusion ensue. I can most religiously aver I have no wish, that is incompatible with the dignity, happiness, and true interest of the people of this country. My ardent desire is, and my aim has been, (as far as depended upon the executive department,) to comply strictly with *all* our engagements, foreign and domestic; but to keep the United States free from political connexions with *every* other country, to see them independent of *all* and under the influence of *none*. In a word, I want an *American* character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for *ourselves,* and not for *others*. This, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home; and not, by becoming the partisans of Great Britain or France, create dissensions, disturb the public tranquillity, and destroy, perhaps for ever, the cement which binds the union.

I am satisfied these sentiments cannot be otherwise than congenial to your own. Your aid therefore in carrying them into effect would be flattering and pleasing to, dear Sir, &c.[1]

[1] The offer of the post of Secretary of State was declined. How the offer was regarded by Washington's critics may be

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING, SECRETARY OF STATE

[PRIVATE]

MOUNT VERNON, 25 July, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

* * * I am glad to find, that more smoke than fire is likely to result from the representation of French discontent on account of our treaty with Great Britain. Had the case been otherwise, there would have been no difficulty in tracing the effect to the cause; and it is far from being impossible, that the whole may have originated in a contrivance of the opposers of the government, to see what effect such threats would work; and finding none that could answer their purpose, and no safe ground to stand on, if they pushed matters to extremity, the matter may terminate in gasconade. Be this as it may, the executive has a plain road to pursue, namely, to fulfil all the engagements, which his duty requires; be influenced beyond this by none of the contending parties; maintain a strict neutrality, unless obliged by imperious circumstances to depart from it; do justice to all, and never forget that we are Americans, the remembrance of which will convince us that we ought not to be French or English. With great esteem and regard, I am, &c.[1]

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inferred from Madison's writing to Jefferson: "The offer of the Secretaryship of State to P. Henry is a circumstance which I should not have believed, without the most unquestionable testimony. Col. Coles tells me Mr. Henry read the letter to him on that subject."

[1] For other strong expressions regarding his neutrality policy and the difficulty of maintaining it, see *Washington to Gouverneur Morris*, 22 December, 1795, *ante*, page 386.

TO JAMES MONROE

PHILADELPHIA, 25 August, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 24th of March, written in cipher, never got to my hands until the 10th instant at Mount Vernon; nor were the contents of it known to me until my arrival in this city on the 21st. For the information contained in it, and your attention thereto, I offer you my best thanks.

Having no clew by which to discover the fact, I am very much at a loss to conjecture by what means a private letter of mine, written to a friend and sent by an American vessel, should have got into the hands of the French Directory. I shall readily acknowledge, however, that the one you allude to, directed to Mr. Gouverneur Morris, was a long and confidential one [1]; but I deny that there is any thing contained in it, that the French government could take exception to, unless the expression of an ardent wish, that the United States might remain in peace with *all the world,* taking no part in the disputes of *any* part of it, should have produced this effect, giving it as my further opinion, that the sentiments of the mass of citizens in this country were in unison with mine.

Confidential as this letter was expected to be, I have no objection to its being seen by anybody; and there is certainly some mistake in saying I had no copy thereof, when there is a press one now before me, in which I discover no expression, that in

[1] For Washington's letter to Gouverneur Morris, see page 386.

the eye of liberality and candor would be deemed objectionable.

To understand the scope and design of my letter properly, and to give it a fair interpretation, it is necessary to observe, that it was written, (as will appear by the contents of it,) in answer to very long ones from the gentleman to whom it was addressed, which contained much political information of the state of things in different parts of Europe, and related among others the substance of a conversation, in which he and Lord Grenville, as private gentlemen, had just been engaged, and in which it was observed by the latter, that, if they were to judge from the publications in this country, the disposition of it was unfriendly to Great Britain; but in free countries he could readily account for such publications; however, that there was *one,* which wore a more serious aspect, as indicative of the sense of the government, and he alluded to Colonel Innes's report of his proceedings in Kentucky.

In my noticing this part of Mr. Morris's communication, I tell him, that, with respect to the publication of that report, it was an unauthorized act, and declared by that gentleman, as soon as he saw it in the gazettes, to have been done incorrectly; and that, with relation to the temper of the people of the United States, as it respected Great Britain, his Lordship ought not to be surprised, if it appeared disturbed and irritated, after the sense of the government had been so often expressed in strong remonstrances against the conduct of the

Indian agents, privateersmen, impressment of our seamen, insults of their ships of war, &c., &c.; adding that it afforded us very little satisfaction, that they disclaimed these as unauthorized acts (which the British administration had done in some instances), while the actors were suffered to go unpunished. I dwelt chiefly and fully on this part of his letter, and reminded him of the indifference with which the advances of the United States to form a commercial treaty with Great Britain, as well since as before the establishment of the present government, had been received; and concluded by saying, that a liberal policy towards us (though I did not suppose sentiments of that sort from me to a member of the British administration would have much weight) was the only road to a perfect reconciliation; and that, if he should again converse with Lord Grenville on this subject, he was at liberty unofficially to express these as my sentiments.

Thus, Sir, you have the substance, candidly related, of a letter, which, you say you have been told by a person, "who has read it, has produced an ill effect," when in my opinion the contrary (viewing it in the light of an unreserved and confidential communication) ought to have been produced. For, I repeat it again, that unless my pacific disposition was displeasing, nothing else could have given umbrage by the most rigid construction of the letter, or that will show in the remotest degree any disposition on my part to favor the British interests in their dispute with France.

My conduct in public and private life, as it re-

lates to the important struggle in which the latter nation is engaged, has been uniform from the commencement of it, and may be summed up in a few words; that I have always wished well to the French revolution; that I have always given it as my decided opinion, that no nation had a right to intermeddle in the internal concerns of another; that every one had a right to form and adopt whatever government they liked best to live under themselves; and that, if this country could, consistently with its engagements, maintain a strict neutrality and thereby preserve peace, it was bound to do so by motives of policy, interest, and every other consideration, that ought to actuate a people situated and circumstanced as we are, already deeply in debt, and in a convalescent state from the struggle we have been engaged in ourselves.

On these principles I have steadily and uniformly proceeded, bidding defiance to calumnies calculated to sow the seeds of distrust in the French nation, and to excite their belief of an influence possessed by Great Britain in the councils of this country, than which nothing is more unfounded and injurious, the object of its pacific conduct being truly delineated above. I am, &c.

TO DAVID STUART

PHILADELPHIA, 8 January, 1797.

DEAR SIR,

* * * What effect M. Adet's conduct has had or will have on the public mind, you can form a

better opinion than me. One of the objects, which he had in view, (in timing the publication,)[1] is too apparent to require explanation. Some of his own *zealots* do not scruple to confess, that he has been too precipitate, and thereby injured the cause he meant to espouse; which is to establish such an influence in this country, as to sway the government and control its measures. Evidences of this design are abundant, and new proofs are exhibiting themselves every day to illustrate the fact; and yet, lamentable thought! a large party, under real or pretended fears of British influence, are moving Heaven and earth to aid him in these designs. It is a fact well known, for history proves it, that, from the restless temper of the French and the policy of that nation, they attempt openly or covertly, by threats or soothing professions, to influence the conduct of most governments. That they have attempted it with us, a little time will show. But, finding a neutral conduct had been adopted, and would not be relinquished by those who administered the government, the next step was to try the people; and, to work upon them, several presses and many scribblers have been employed, to emblazon the improper acts of the British government and its officers, and to place them in all the most exaggerated and odious points of view they

[1] Probably the pamphlet, which had just been issued in Philadelphia, entitled "Notes adressées par le Citoyen Adet, Ministre Plénipotentiare de la République Française près les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, au Secrétaire d'Etat des Etats-Unis." This pamphlet was printed in French, with a translation facing each page, the whole extending to ninety-five pages.—*Sparks.*

were susceptible; to complain, that there was not only a deficiency of friendship, but a want of justice also, in the executive towards France, the cause of which, say they, is to be found in a predilection for Great Britain. This not working as well as was expected, from a supposition that there was too much confidence, and perhaps personal regard for, the present chief magistrate and his politics, the batteries latterly have been levelled at him particularly and personally. Although he is soon to become a private citizen, his opinions are to be knocked down, and his character reduced as low as they are capable of sinking it, even by resorting to absolute falsehoods. As an evidence whereof, and of the plan they are pursuing, I send you a letter from Mr. Paine to me, printed in this city, and disseminated with great industry.[1] Others of a similar nature are also in circulation.

To what lengths the French Directory will ultimately go, is difficult to say; but, that they have

[1] Thomas Paine, whose ability as a writer contributed so much to the success of the War for Independence, later became a resident of France and a member of its National Convention, where he played a conspicuous part. Upon the rise of Robespierre he lost favor and was imprisoned. In this state he remained until the downfall of Robespierre, when he was released and went to live with Monroe. Filled with resentment against Washington because the President had refused to make demand on the French government for his liberation, Paine now addressed to him a bitter and intemperate letter, in the course of which he said, "As to you, sir, treacherous in private friendship (for so you have been to me, and that in the day of danger) and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide, whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any."

been led to the present point by our own people, I have no doubt. Whether some, who have done this, would choose to accompany them any farther or not, I shall not undertake to decide. But I shall be mistaken, if the candid part of my countrymen, (although they may be under a French influence,) do not see and acknowledge, that they have imbibed erroneous impressions of the conduct of this government towards France, when the communication, which I promised at the opening of the session, and which will be ready in a few days, comes before the public. It will be seen, if I mistake not, also, that that country has not such a claim upon our gratitude, as has been generally supposed, and that this country has violated no engagement with it, been guilty of no act of injustice towards it, nor been wanting in friendship, where it could be rendered without departing from that neutral station we had taken and resolved to maintain.[1] * * *

[1] "I hope, as you do, that, notwithstanding our political horizon is much overcast, the wisdom, temper, and firmness of the government, supported by the great mass of the people, will dispel the threatening clouds, and that all will end without any shedding of blood. To me this is so demonstrable, that not a particle of doubt would dwell on my mind relative thereto, if our citizens would advocate their own cause, instead of that of any other nation under the sun; that is, if, instead of being Frenchmen or Englishmen in politics, they would be Americans, indignant at every attempt of either, or any other power, to establish an influence in our councils, or presume to sow the seeds of discord or disunion among us. No policy, in my opinion, can be more clearly demonstrated, than that we should do justice to all, and have no political connexion with any of the European powers beyond those, which result from and serve to regulate our commerce with them. Our own experience, if it has not already had this effect, will soon convince us, that the

TO JOHN ADAMS, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

MOUNT VERNON, 4 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR,

Not being in the habit, since my return to private life, of sending regularly to the post-office, (nine miles from hence,) every post-day, it often happens that letters addressed to me lye longer there on that account, than they otherwise would do.

I have delayed no time unnecessarily since I had the honor of receiving your very obliging favor of the 22d ultimo, to thank you for the polite and flattering sentiments you have been pleased to express relatively to me, and to assure you, that, as far as it is in my power to support your administration, and to render it easy, happy, and honorable, you may command me without reserve.

At the epoch of my retirement, an Invasion of these States by an European Power, or even the probability of such an event happening *in my days,* was so far from being contemplated by me, that I had no conception that that or any other occurrence would arise in so short a period, which could turn my eyes from the shades of Mount Vernon. But this seems to be the age of wonders; and reserved for intoxicated and lawless France (for purposes of Providence far beyond the reach

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idea of disinterested favors or friendship from any nation whatever is too novel to be calculated on, and there will always be found a wide difference between the words and actions of any of them."—*Washington to William Heath,* 20 May, 1797.

of human ken) to slaughter its own citizens, and to disturb the repose of all the world besides.[1]

From a view of the past, from the prospect present—and of that which seems to be expected, it is not easy for me to decide satisfactorily on the part it might best become me to act. In case of *actual Invasion* by a formidable force, I certainly should not Intrench myself under the cover of age and retirement, if my services should be required by my Country to assist in repelling it. And if there be good cause, which must be better known to the Government than to private citizens, to expect such an event, delay in preparing for it might be dangerous, improper, and not to be justified by prudence. The uncertainty, however, of the latter, in my mind, creates *my* embarrassment; for I cannot fairly bring it to believe, disregardful as the French are of treaties and of the laws of nations, and capable as I conceive them to be of *any* species of Despotism and Injustice, that they will attempt to invade this country, after such a uniform and unequivocal expression of the sense of the *People* in all parts to oppose them with their lives and fortunes.

That they have been led to believe, by their

[1] In 1798 the relations between France and the United States assumed so threatening an aspect that Congress, on May 28, authorized the President to raise and organize a Provisional Army of ten thousand men. On July 2, without waiting to learn his wishes, President Adams nominated to the Senate "George Washington, of Mount Vernon, to be lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of all the armies raised and to be raised in the United States." The nomination was unanimously confirmed.

agents and Partisans amongst *us,* that we are a divided people, that the latter are opposed to their own Government, and that a show of a small force would occasion a revolt, I have *no* doubt; and how far these men, (grown desperate,) will further attempt to deceive, and may succeed in keeping up the deception, is problematical. Without this, the folly of the Directory in such an attempt would, I conceive, be more conspicuous, if possible, than their wickedness.

Having with candor made this disclosure of the state of my mind, it remains only that I should add, that to those who know me best it is best known, that, if imperious circumstances should induce me to renounce the smooth paths of Retirement for the thorny ways of Public life, at a period too when repose is most congenial to nature, and a calm indispensable to contemplation, that it would be productive of sensations, which can be more easily conceived than expressed.

The difficulty in which you expect to be involved, in the choice of general officers, when you come to form the army, is certainly a serious one; and, in a Government like ours, where there are so many considerations to be attended to and to combine, it will be found not a little perplexing. But, as the mode of carrying on the War against the Foe that threatens must differ widely from that practised in the contest for Independence, it will not be an easy matter, I conceive, to find, among the *old set* of Generals, men of sufficient activity, energy, and health, and of sound politics, to train troops to the

"quick step," long marches, and severe conflicts they may have to encounter; and, therefore, that recourse must be had, (for the greater part at least,) to the well-known, most experienced, best proved and intelligent officers of the late army without respect to Grade.

I speak with diffidence, however, on this head, having no list by me from which my memory could be refreshed. There is one thing though, on which I can give a decided opinion; and, as it is of the utmost importance to the Public, to the army, and to the officer commanding it, be him whom he will, I will take the liberty of suggesting it *now*. It is, that the greatest circumspection be used in appointing the General staff. If this corps is not composed of respectable characters, [with] knowledge of the duties of their respective Departments, able, active, and firm, and of incorruptible integrity and prudence, and withal such as the Commander-in-Chief can place entire confidence in, his plans and movements, if not defeated altogether, may be so embarrassed and retarded, as to amount nearly to the same thing; and this almost with impunity on their part. * * *

The opening given me in your letter is such, as hath prompted me to express these sentiments with freedom; and persuading myself, that you will ascribe them to pure motives, although they may differ from your own ideas, I have no doubt of their being well received. With the greatest respect and consideration I have the honor to be, dear Sir, &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

MOUNT VERNON, 13 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR,

I had the honor, on the evening of the 11th instant, to receive from the hands of the Secretary of War your favor of the 7th, announcing that you had, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed me Lieutenant-General and Commander-in-Chief of all the armies raised or to be raised for the service of the United States.

I cannot express how greatly affected I am at this new proof of public confidence, and the highly flattering manner in which you have been pleased to make the communication; at the same time I must not conceal from you my earnest wish, that the choice had fallen on a man less declined in years, and better qualified to encounter the usual vicissitudes of war.

You know, Sir, what calculations I had made relative to the probable course of events on my retiring from office, and the determination I had consoled myself with, of closing the remnant of my days in my present peaceful abode. You will, therefore, be at no loss to conceive and appreciate the sensations I must have experienced, to bring my mind to any conclusion that would pledge me, at so late a period of life, to leave Scenes I sincerely love, to enter upon the boundless field of public action, incessant trouble, and high responsibility.

It was not possible for me to remain ignorant

of, or indifferent to, recent transactions. The conduct of the Directory of France towards our Country, their insidious hostility to its government, their various practices to withdraw the affections of the People from it, the evident tendency of their arts and those of their agents to countenance and invigorate opposition, their disregard of solemn treaties and the laws of nations, their war upon our defenceless commerce, their treatment of our minister of peace, and their demands amounting to tribute, could not fail to excite in me corresponding sentiments with those my countrymen have so generally expressed in their affectionate addresses to you. Believe me, Sir, no one can more cordially approve of the wise and prudent measures of your administration. They ought to inspire universal confidence, and will no doubt, combined with the state of things, call from Congress such laws and means, as will enable you to meet the full force and extent of the crisis.

Satisfied, therefore, that you have sincerely wished and endeavored to avert war, and exhausted to the last drop the cup of reconciliation, we can with pure hearts appeal to Heaven for the justice of our cause, and may confidently trust the final result to that kind Providence, who has heretofore and so often signally favored the people of these United States.

Thinking, in this manner, and feeling how incumbent it is upon every person of every description to contribute at all times to his country's welfare, and especially in a moment like the pres-

ent, when every thing we hold dear is so seriously threatened, I have finally determined to accept the Commission of Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the United States; with the reserve only, that I shall not be called into the field until the army is in a situation to require my presence, or it becomes indispensable by the urgency of circumstances.

In making this reservation I beg it to be understood, that I do not mean to withhold any assistance to arrange and organize the army, which you may think I can afford. I take the liberty also to mention, that I must decline having my acceptance considered as drawing after it any immediate charge upon the public, and that I cannot receive any emoluments annexed to the appointment, before entering into a Situation to incur expense.

The Secretary of War being anxious to return to the seat of Government, I have detained him no longer than was necessary to a full communication upon the several points he had in charge. With very great respect and consideration, I have the honor to be, &c.

TO JAMES ANDERSON

MOUNT VERNON, 25 July, 1798.

ESTEEMED SIR,

* * * I little imagined, when I took my last leave of the walks of public life, that any event could bring me again on a public theatre. But the unjust conduct of France towards these United States has been and continues to be such, that it

must be opposed by a firm and manly resistance, or we shall not only hazard the subjugation of our government, but the independence of our nation also; both being evidently struck at by a lawless, domineering power, which respects no rights, and is restrained by no treaties, when it is found inconvenient to observe them.

While we are thus situated, sustaining daily injuries, even indignities, with a patient forbearance, from a sincere desire to live in peace and harmony with all the world; the French Directory, mistaking the American character, and supposing that the people of this country were divided, and would give countenance to their nefarious measures, have proceeded to exact loans (or in other words contributions), and to threaten us, in case of non-compliance with their wild, unfounded, and inconsistent complaints, that we should share the fate of Venice and other Italian states.

This has roused the people from their slumbers, and filled them with indignation from one extremity to the other of the Union; and I trust, if they should attempt to carry their threats into effect, and invade our territorial, as they have done our commercial rights, they will meet a spirit, that will give them more trouble than they are aware of, in the citizens of these States.

When every thing sacred and dear to freemen is thus threatened, I could not, consistently with the principles which have actuated me through life, remain an idle spectator, and refuse to obey the call of my country to lead its armies for *defence,* and

therefore have pledged myself to come forward whensoever the exigency shall require it.

With what sensations, at my time of life, now turned of sixty-six, without ambition or interest to stimulate me thereto, I shall relinquish the peaceful walk to which I had retired, and in the shades of which I had fondly hoped to spend the remnant of a life, worn down with cares, in contemplation of the past, and in scenes present and to come of rural enjoyment, let others, and especially those who are best acquainted with the construction of my mind, decide; while I, believing that man was not designed by the all-wise Creator to live for himself alone, prepare for the worst that can happen. * * *

TO GENERAL LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 25 December, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * To give you a complete view of the politics and situation of things in this country would far exceed the limits of a letter, and to trace effects to their causes would be a work of time. But the sum of them may be given in a few words, and amounts to this. That a party exists in the United States, formed by a combination of causes, which oppose the government in all its measures, and are determined (as all their conduct evinces) by clogging its wheels indirectly to change the nature of it, and to subvert the constitution.

To effect this, no means which have a tendency to accomplish their purposes are left unessayed. The friends of government, who are anxious to maintain its neutrality, and to preserve the country in peace, and adopt measures to secure these are charged by them as being monarchists, aristocrats, and infractors of the constitution, which, according to their interpretation of it, would be a mere cipher. While they arrogated to themselves (until the eyes of the people began to discover how outrageously they had been treated in their commercial concerns by the Directory of France, and that that was a ground on which they could no longer tread) the sole merit of being the friends of France, when in fact they had no more regard for that nation than for the Grand Turk, further than their own views were promoted by it; denouncing those who differed in opinion, (whose principles are purely American, and whose sole view was to observe a strict neutrality) with acting under British influence, and being directed by her counsels, now with being her pensioners.

This is but a short sketch of what requires much time to illustrate; and is given with no other view, than to show you what would be your situation here at this crisis under such circumstances as it unfolds.

You have expressed a wish, worthy of the benevolence of your heart, that I would exert all my endeavors to avert the calamitous effects of a rupture between our countries. Believe me, my dear friend, that no man can deprecate an event of this

sort with more horror than I should, and that no one, during the whole of my administration, labored more incessantly, and with more sincerity and zeal, than I did, to avoid this, and to render every justice, nay favor, to France, consistent with the neutrality, which had been proclaimed, sanctioned by Congress, approved by the State legislatures, and the people at large in their town and county meetings. But neutrality was not the point at which France was aiming; for, whilst it was crying *Peace, Peace,* and pretending that they did not wish us to be embroiled in their quarrel with Great Britain, they were pursuing measures in *this country* so repugnant to its sovereignty, and so incompatible with every principle of neutrality, as must inevitably have produced a war with the latter. And when they found, that the government *here* was resolved to adhere steadily to its plan of neutrality, their next step was to destroy the confidence of the people in and to separate them from it; for which purpose their diplomatic agents were specially instructed, and in the attempt were aided by inimical characters among ourselves, not, as I observed before, because they loved France more than any other nation, but because it was an instrument to facilitate the destruction of their own government.

Hence proceeded those charges, which I have already enumerated, against the friends to peace and order. No doubt remains on this side of the water, that to the representations of, and encouragement given by, these people is to be ascribed, in a

great measure, the infractions of our treaty with France; her violation of the laws of nations, disregard of justice, and even of sound policy. But herein they have not only deceived France, but were deceived themselves, as the event has proved; for, no sooner did the yeomanry of this country come to a right understanding of the nature of the dispute, than they rose as one man with a tender of their services, their lives, and their fortunes to support the government of their choice, and to defend their country. This has produced a declaration from them (how sincere let others judge), that, if the French should attempt to invade this country, they themselves would be amongst the foremost to repel the attack.

You add in another place, that the Executive Directory are disposed to accommodation of all differences. If they are sincere in this declaration, let them evidence it by actions; for words unaccompanied therewith will not be much regarded now. I would pledge myself, that the government and people of the United States will meet them heart and hand at *fair* negotiation; having no wish more ardent, than to live in peace with all the world, provided they are suffered to remain undisturbed in their just rights. Of this, their patience, forbearance, and repeated solicitations under accumulated injuries and insults, are incontestable proofs; but it is not to be inferred from hence, that they suffer any nation under the sun, (while they retain a proper sense of virtue and independence,) to trample upon their rights with impunity, or to

direct or influence the internal concerns of their country.

It has been the policy of France, and that of the opposition party among ourselves, to inculcate a belief that all those, who have exerted themselves to keep this country in peace, did it from an overweening attachment to Great Britain. But it is a solemn truth, and you may count upon it, that it is void of foundation, and propagated for no other purpose, than to excite popular clamor against those, whose aim was peace, and whom they wished out of the way.

That there are many among us, who wish to see this country embroiled on the side of Great Britain, and others, who are anxious that we should take part with France against her, admits of no doubt. But it is a fact, on which you may entirely and absolutely rely, that the governing powers of the country and a large part of the people are truly Americans in principle, attached to the interest of it, and unwilling under any circumstances whatsoever to participate in the politics or contests of Europe; much less, since they have found that France, having forsaken the ground she first took, is interfering in the internal concerns of all nations, neutral as well as belligerent, and setting the world in an uproar.

After my Valedictory Address to the people of the United States, you would no doubt be somewhat surprised to hear, that I had again consented to gird on the sword. But, having struggled eight or nine years against the invasion of our rights by

one power, and to establish our independence of it, I could not remain an unconcerned spectator of the attempt of another power to accomplish the same object, though in a different way, with less pretensions; indeed, without any at all.

On the politics of Europe I shall express no opinion, nor make any inquiry who is right or who is wrong. I wish well to all nations and to all men. My politics are plain and simple. I think every nation has a right to establish that form of government, under which it conceives it shall live most happy; provided it infracts no right, or is not dangerous to others; and that no governments ought to interfere with the internal concerns of another, except for the security of what is due to themselves. * * *

TO BRYAN, LORD FAIRFAX

MOUNT VERNON, 20th Jany., 1799.

DEAR SIR,

* * * When I presented my Valedictory address to the People of the United States, in September, 1796, I little thought that any event would occur in my day, that could again withdraw me from the Retirement after which I had been so long panting;—but we know little of ourselves, and still less of the ways of Providence.—The injurious treatment this Country had received from France, in an open violation of the Treaty between the two Countries, and the laws of Nations.—The Insults & Indignities with which all our overtures for an

amicable adjustment of the disputes were treated. —The increasing depredations on our commerce, accompanied with outrage & threats, if we did not comply with their demands, leaving no hope of obtaining restitution for the past, or preserving the little that remained, or the Country from Invasion, but by the adoption of vigorous measures for self defence, having come fully to the view of the People, their resentments have been roused, and with one voice as it were, have made a tender of their lives and fortunes to repel any attempts which may be made on the Constitution or Government of their Country—In consequence of which, and to be prepared for the dernier ressort, if unhappily we shall be driven to it—Troops are to be raised, and the United States placed in a posture of defence—Under these circumstances, and it appearing to be the wish of my Countrymen, and the request of the governing Powers that I should take charge of their Armies, I am embarked so far in the business as will appear by my letter to the President of the 13th of July last—which, as it has run through all the news-papers here, and Published in many of the Foreign Gazettes, you probably may have seen; and though still at home, where indeed I hope to remain, under a persuasion that the French will discover the injustice and absurdity of their conduct;—I hold myself in readiness to gird on the sword, if the immergency shall require it.

Notwithstanding, the Spirit of the People is so animated, that party among us who have been uni-

form in their opposition to all the measures of Government; in short to every Act, either of Executive or Legislative Authority, which seemed to be calculated to defeat French usurpations and to lessen the influence of that Nation in our Country, hang upon & clog its wheels as much as in them lye—and with a rancor & virulence which is scarcely to be conceived;—Torturing every act, by unnatural construction, into a design to violate the Constitution—Introduce Monarchy—& to establish an aristocracy—And what is more to be regretted, the same Spirit seems to have laid hold of the major part of the Legislature of this State, while all the other States in the Union (Kentucky the child of Virginia, excepted) are coming forward with the most unequivocal evidences of their approbation of the measures which have been adopted by both, for self preservation.— In what such a spirit, and such proceedings will issue, is beyond the reach of short sighted men to predict, with any degree of certainty.—I hope well—because I have always believed and trusted, that that Providence which has carried us through a long and painful War with one of the most powerful nations in Europe, will not suffer the discontented among ourselves to produce more than a temporary interruption to the permanent Peace and happiness of this rising Empire—That they have been the cause of our present disquietudes, and the means of stimulating (by mis-representing the sentiments of the mass of citizens of this Country) the Directory of France to their unwarrantable

Acts—not from more real affection to the nation than others possess, but to facilitate the design of subverting their own government—I have no more doubt than that I am now in the act of writing you this letter— * * *

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4. The Whiskey Insurrection

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

Mount Vernon, 7 September, 1792.

Sir,

The last post brought me your letter of the 1st instant, with the enclosures respecting the disorderly conduct of the inhabitants of the western survey of the district of Pennsylvania, in opposing the execution of what is called the excise law; and of the insults which have been offered by some of them to the officers, who have been appointed to collect the duties on distilled spirits agreeably thereto.[1]

Such conduct in any of the citizens of the United

[1] Among Hamilton's financial measures enacted in 1791 was the excise law levying a tax of twenty-five cents a gallon on whiskey. The tax excited great opposition, partly because it was one to which the people were not accustomed and partly because it bore with considerable hardship on the people of western Pennsylvania, who were far removed from the ordinary channels of commerce and who produced only one commodity of considerable value in small bulk. While the disturbance was not in itself very serious, its suppression was of great political importance, since it was one of the first demonstrations by the new government of its right and of its ability to enforce its laws.

States, under any circumstances that can well be conceived, would be exceedingly reprehensible; but, when it comes from a part of the community for whose protection the money arising from the tax was principally designed, it is truly unaccountable, and the spirit of it much to be regretted.

The preliminary steps taken by you in ordering the supervisor of the district to repair to the survey, where these disorders prevail, with a view to ascertain in person "the true state of the survey; to collect evidences respecting the violences that have been committed, in order to a prosecution of the offenders; to ascertain the particulars as to the meeting which appears to have been held at Pittsburg; to encourage the perseverance of the officers in their duty, and the well-disposed inhabitants in discountenancing such violent proceedings," are prudent and proper, and I earnestly wish they may have the desired effect. But if, notwithstanding, opposition is still given to the due execution of the law, I have no hesitation in declaring, if the evidence of it is clear and unequivocal, that I shall, however reluctantly I exercise them, exert all the legal powers with which the executive is invested to check so daring and unwarrantable a spirit. It is my duty to see the laws executed. To permit them to be trampled upon with impunity would be repugnant to it; nor can the government longer remain a passive spectator of the contempt, with which they are treated. Forbearance, under a hope that the inhabitants of that survey would recover from the delirium and folly into which they were

plunged, seems to have had no other effect than to increase the disorder.

If it shall be the attorney-general's opinion, under a full consideration of the case (adverting, as I presume he will, as well to the laws and constitution of Pennsylvania, as to those of the United States), that the meeting, which appears to have been held at Pittsburg, was illegal, and the members of it indictable, and it shall further appear to you from such information as you may be able to obtain from a comparative view of all circumstances, that it would be proper to bring the matter before the circuit court to be holden at Yorktown in October next, you have all the sanction and authority I can give to do it. I am, Sir, &c.[1]

TO BURGES BALL

GERMANTOWN, 10 August, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

* * * What (under the rose I ask it) is said

[1] Acting on the advice of Hamilton, Washington issued a proclamation warning the rioters to desist from their unlawful acts and indicating the intention of the President to use all the means at his command for the enforcement of the laws. See Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, i., 124.

"I have no doubt but that the proclamation will undergo many strictures; and, as the effect proposed may not be answered by it, it will be necessary to look forward in time to ulterior arrangements. And here not only the constitution and laws must strictly govern, but the employing of regular troops avoided, if it be possible to effect order without their aid; otherwise there would be a cry at once, 'The cat is let out; we now see for what purpose an army was raised.' Yet, if no other means will effectually answer, and the constitution and

or thought, as far as it has appeared to you, of the conduct of the People of the Western Counties of this State (Pennsylvania) towards the excise officers?—and does there seem to be a disposition among those with whom you converse to bring them to a sense of their duty, and obedience to law, by coercion, if, after they are fully notified by Proclamation and other expedients of the consequences of such outrageous proceedings, they do not submit to the Laws of the United States, and suffer the collection of the duties upon spirituous liquors and stills to be made as in other places? In a word, would there be any difficulty, as far as the matter has passed under your observation, in drawing out a part of the Militia of Loudoun, Berkeley and Frederick—to quell this rebellious spirit and to support order and good government? You will readily perceive that questions of this sort from me to you and your answers, are for my private information, and to go no farther than ourselves. * * *

TO CHARLES M. THRUSTON

[PRIVATE]

PHILADELPHIA, 10 August, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 21st of June came duly to hand. For the communications contained in it I thank you, as I shall do for any other that is interesting to the community, and necessary for me to

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laws will authorize these, they must be used as the dernier resort."—*Washington to Hamilton*, 16 September, 1792.

be informed of. That there should exist in this country such a spirit as you say pervades the people of Kentucky, (and which I have also learnt through other channels,) is to me matter of great wonder; and that it should prevail there, more than in any other part of the Union, is not less surprising to those, who are acquainted with the exertions of the general government in their favor. But it will serve to evince, whensoever and to whomsoever facts are developed (and they are not unknown at this moment to many of the principal characters in that State), that there must exist a predisposition among them to be dissatisfied, under any circumstances and under every exertion of government (short of a war with Spain, which must eventually involve one with Great Britain,) to promote their welfare.

The protection they receive, and the unwearied endeavors of the general government to accomplish, (by repeated and ardent remonstrances,) what they seem to have most at heart, namely, the navigation of the Mississippi, obtain no credit with them, or, what is full as likely, may be concealed from them or misrepresented by those *Societies*, who, under specious colorings, are spreading mischief far and wide, either from real ignorance of the measures pursuing by the government, or from a wish to bring it, as much as they are able, into discredit; for what purposes, every man is left to his own conjectures.

That similar attempts to discontent the public mind have been practised with too much success in

some of the western counties in this State, you are, I am certain, not to learn.[1] Actual rebellion against the laws of the United States exists at this moment, notwithstanding every lenient measure, which could comport with the duties of the public officers, has been exercised to reconcile them to the collection of the taxes upon spirituous liquors and stills. What may be the consequences of such violent and outrageous proceedings is painful in a high degree even in contemplation. But, if the laws are to be so trampled upon with impunity, and a minority, (a small one too,) is to dictate to the majority, there is an end put, at one stroke, to republican government; and nothing but anarchy and confusion is to be expected hereafter. Some other man or society may dislike another law, and oppose it with equal propriety, until all laws are prostrate, and every one, (the strongest I presume,) will carve for himself. Yet there will be found persons, I have no doubt, who, although they may not be hardy enough to justify such open opposition to the laws, will nevertheless be opposed to coercion, even if the proclamation and the other temperate measures, which are in train by the executive to avert the dire necessity of a resort to

[1] "It is true that the opposition to the excise laws began from causes foreign to Democratic Societies, but it is well ascertained by proof in the course of judiciary investigations that the insurrection immediately is to be essentially attributed to one of those societies sometimes called the Mingo-Creek Society, sometimes the Democratic Society. An early and active member of it commanded the first attack at Neville's House; another active member of that Society, McFarlane, the second attack."—*Hamilton to Fitzsimmons*, 27 November, 1794.

arms, should fail. How far such people may extend their influence, and what may be the consequences thereof, is not easy to decide; but this we know, that it is not difficult by concealment of some facts and the exaggeration of others, (where there is an influence,) to lead a well-meaning mind, although we allow truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light.

I have a great regard for General Morgan, and respect his military talents, and am persuaded, if a fit occasion should occur, no one would exert them with more zeal in the service of his country than he would. It is my ardent wish, however, that this country should remain in peace as long as the interest, honor, and dignity of it will permit, and its laws, enacted by the representatives of the people freely chosen, shall obtain. With much esteem, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO HENRY LEE, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

[PRIVATE]

GERMANTOWN, 26 August, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 17th came duly to hand, and I thank you for its communications. As the insurgents in the western counties of this State are resolved, (as far as we have yet been able to learn from the commissioners, who have been sent among them,) to persevere in their rebellious conduct until what they call the excise law is repealed, and acts of oblivion and amnesty are passed, it gives

me sincere consolation amidst the regrets, with which I am filled by such lawless and outrageous conduct, to find by your letter above mentioned, that it is held in general detestation by the good people of Virginia, and that you are disposed to lend your *personal* aid to subdue this spirit, and to bring those people to a proper sense of their duty.

On this latter point I shall refer you to letters from the war office, and to a private one from Colonel Hamilton, (who, in the absence of the Secretary of War, superintends the *military* duties of that department,) for my sentiments on this occasion.

It is with equal pride and satisfaction I add, that, as far as my information extends, this insurrection is viewed with universal indignation and abhorrence, except by those, who have never missed an opportunity by side blows or otherwise to aim their shafts at the general government; and even among these there is not a spirit hardy enough yet openly to justify the daring infractions of law and order; but by palliatives are attempting to suspend all proceedings against the insurgents, until Congress shall have decided on the case, thereby intending to gain time, and if possible to make the evil more extensive, more formidable, and of course more difficult to counteract and subdue.

I consider this insurrection as the first *formidable* fruit of the Democratic Societies, brought forth, I believe, too prematurely for their own views, which may contribute to the annihilation of them.

That these societies were instituted by the *artful and designing* members (many of their body I have no doubt mean well, but know little of the real plan,) primarily to sow the seeds of jealousy and distrust among the people of the government, by destroying all confidence in the administration of it, and that these doctrines have been budding and blowing ever since, is not new to any one, who is acquainted with the character of their leaders, and has been attentive to their manœuvres. I early gave it as my opinion to the confidential characters around me, that, if these societies were not counteracted, (not by prosecutions, the ready way to make them grow stronger,) or did not fall into disesteem from the knowledge of their origin, and the views with which they had been instituted by their father, Genet, for purposes well known to the government, that they would shake the government to its foundation. Time and circumstances have confirmed me in this opinion; and I deeply regret the probable consequences; not as they will affect me personally, for I have not long to act on this theatre, and sure I am that not a man amongst them can be more anxious to put me aside, than I am to sink into the profoundest retirement, but because I see, under a display of popular and fascinating guises, the most diabolical attempts to destroy the best fabric of human government and happiness, that has ever been presented for the acceptance of mankind.

A part of the plan for creating discord is, I perceive, to make me say things of others, and others

of me, which have no foundation in truth. The first, in many instances I *know* to be the case; and the second I believe to be so. But truth or falsehood is immaterial to them, provided the objects are promoted. * * *

TO BURGES BALL

PHILADELPHIA, 25 September, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 10th instant from the Sulphur Springs has been received. I hear with the greatest pleasure of the spirit, which so generally pervades the militia of every State, that has been called upon on the present occasion; and of the decided discountenance the incendiaries of public peace and order have met with in their attempts to spread their nefarious doctrines, with a view to poison and discontent the minds of the people against the government; particularly by endeavoring to have it believed, that their liberties were assailed, and that all the wicked and abominable measures that can be devised under specious guises are practised to sap the constitution, and lay the foundation of future slavery.

The insurrection in the western counties of this State is a striking evidence of this, and may be considered as the first ripe *fruit* of the Democratic Societies. I did not, I must confess, expect it would come to maturity so soon, though I never had a doubt that such conduct would produce some such issue, if it did not meet the frowns of those, who

were well disposed to order and good government in time; for can any thing be more absurd, more arrogant, or more pernicious to the peace of society, than for self-created bodies, forming themselves into permanent censors, and under the shade of night in a conclave resolving that acts of Congress, which have undergone the most deliberate and solemn discussion by the representatives of the people, chosen for the express purpose and bringing with them from the different parts of the Union the sense of their constituents, endeavoring as far as the nature of the thing will admit to form *their will* into laws for the government of the whole; I say, under these circumstances, for a self-created *permanent* body (for no one denies the right of the people to meet occasionally to petition for, or remonstrate against, any act of the legislature) to declare that *this act* is unconstitutional, and *that act* is pregnant with mischiefs, and that all, who vote contrary to their dogmas, are actuated by selfish motives or under foreign influence, nay, are pronounced traitors to their country? Is such a stretch of arrogant presumption to be reconciled with laudable motives, especially when we see the same set of men endeavoring to destroy all confidence in the administration, by arraigning all its acts, without knowing on what ground or with what information it proceeds?

These things were evidently intended, and could not fail without counteraction, to disquiet the public mind; but I hope and trust this will work their own curse; especially when it is known more gen-

erally than it is, that the Democratic Society of this place, from which the others have emanated, was instituted by M. Genet for the express purpose of dissension, and to draw a line between the people and the government, after he found the officers of the latter would not yield to the hostile measures in which he wanted to embroil this country.

I hope this letter will find you, Mrs. Ball, and the family in better health, than when you wrote last. Remember me to them, and be assured that I remain your affectionate friend.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL DANIEL MORGAN

CARLISLE, 8 October, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

In the moment I was leaving the city of Philadelphia for this place, your letter of the 24th ultimo was put into my hands. Although I regret the occasion which has called you into the field, I rejoice to hear you are there; and it is probable I may meet you at Fort Cumberland, whither I shall proceed, so soon as I see the troops at this rendezvous in condition to advance. At that place, or at Bedford, my ulterior resolution must be taken, either to advance with the troops into the insurgent counties of this State, or to return to Philadelphia for the purpose of meeting Congress the 3d of next month.[1]

[1] "The President will be governed by circumstances. If the thing puts on an appearance of magnitude, he goes; if not, he

Imperious circumstances alone can justify my absence from the seat of government, whilst Congress are in session; but if these, from the disposition of the people in the refractory counties, and the state of the information I expect to receive at the advanced posts, should appear to exist, the lesser must yield to the greater duties of my office, and I shall cross the mountains with the troops; if not, I shall place the command of the combined force under the orders of Governor Lee of Virginia, and repair to the seat of government.

I am perfectly in sentiment with you, that the business we are drawn out upon should be effectually executed, and that the daring and factious spirit, which has arisen (to overturn the laws and to subvert the constitution,) ought to be subdued. If this is not done, there is an end of, and we may bid adieu to, all government in this country, except mob and club government, from whence nothing but anarchy and confusion can ensue. If the minority, and a small one too, is suffered to dictate to the majority, after measures have undergone the most solemn discussions by the representatives of

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stays. There is a *pro* and a *con* in the case."—*Hamilton to Jay*, 17 September, 1794.

"I do not expect to be here [Fort Cumberland] more than two days; thence to Bedford, where, as soon as matters are arranged and a plan settled, I shall shape my course for Philadelphia; but not because the impertinence of Mr. Bache or his correspondent has undertaken to pronounce, that I cannot constitutionally command the army, whilst Congress are in session."—*Washington to Edmund Randolph*, 16 October, 1794. This is the only instance in the history of the United States in which the President has assumed personal command and direction of troops in active service.

the people, and their will through this medium is enacted into a law, there can be no security for life, liberty, or property; nor if the laws are not to govern, can any man know how to conduct himself in safety. There never was a law yet made, I conceive, that hit the taste *exactly* of every man, or every part of the community; of course, if this be a reason for opposition, no law can be executed at all without force, and every man or set of men will in that case cut and carve for themselves; the consequences of which must be deprecated by all classes of men, who are friends to order, and to the peace and happiness of the country. But how can things be otherwise than they are, when clubs and societies have been instituted for the express purpose, though clothed in another garb, by their diabolical leader Genet, whose object was to sow sedition, to poison the minds of the people of this country, and to make them discontented with the government of it, who have labored indefatigably to effect these purposes. * * *

TO HENRY LEE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE MILITIA ARMY

BEDFORD, 20 October, 1794.

SIR,

Being about to return to the seat of government, I cannot take my departure, without conveying through you to the army under your command, the very high sense I entertain of the enlightened and patriotic zeal for the constitution and the laws,

which has led them cheerfully to quit their families, homes, and the comforts of private life, to undertake and thus far to perform a long and fatiguing march, and to encounter the hardships and privations of a military life. Their conduct hitherto affords a full assurance, that their perseverance will be equal to their zeal, and that they will continue to perform with alacrity whatever the full accomplishment of the object of their march shall render necessary.

No citizens of the United States can ever be engaged in a service more important to their country. It is nothing less than to consolidate and to preserve the blessings of that revolution, which, at much expense of blood and treasure, constituted us a free and independent nation. It is to give the world an illustrious example, of the utmost consequence to the cause of mankind. I experience a heart-felt satisfaction in the conviction, that the conduct of the troops throughout will be in every respect answerable to the goodness of the cause and the magnitude of the stake.

There is but one other point on which I think it proper to add a special recommendation; it is, that every officer and soldier will constantly bear in mind, that he comes to support the laws, and that it would be peculiarly unbecoming in him to be in any way the infractor of them; that the essential principles of a free government confine the province of the military, when called forth on such occasions, to these two objects, first, to combat and subdue all who may be found in arms in opposition

to the national will and authority, secondly, to aid and support the civil magistrates in bringing offenders to justice. The dispensation of this justice belongs to the civil magistrate; and let it ever be our pride and our glory to leave the sacred deposit there inviolate. Convey to my fellow-citizens in arms my warm acknowledgments for the readiness, with which they have hitherto seconded me in the most delicate and momentous duty the chief magistrate of a free people can have to perform, and add my affectionate wishes for their health, comfort, and success. Could my further presence with them have been necessary, or compatible with my civil duties at a period when the approaching commencement of a session of Congress particularly calls me to return to the seat of government, it would not have been withheld. In leaving them I have the less regret, as I know I commit them to an able and faithful direction, and that this direction will be ably and faithfully seconded by all. I am, &c.[1]

[1] "I heard great complaints of Gurney's Corps (and some of the Artillery) along the road to Strasburgh.—There I parted from their Rout.—In some places, I was told they did not leave a plate, a spoon, a glass or a knife; and this owing, in a great measure, as I was informed, to their being left without Officers.—At *most* if not *all* the encampments, I found the fences in a manner burnt up.—I pray you to mention this to Govr. Mifflin, (and indeed to the Qr. Mr. General) with a request (to the former) that the most pointed orders may be given, and every precaution used, to prevent the like on the return of the Army. If the Officers from impatience to get home, should leave their respective commands;—in a word, if they do not march with, and keep the soldiers in their ranks, and from straggling or loitering behind, the borderers on the road will sustain inconceivable damage from the disorderly Troops;

TO JOHN JAY

[PRIVATE]

PHILADELPHIA, 1 November, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * As you have been, and will continue to be, fully informed by the Secretary of State of all transactions of a public nature, which relate to, or may have an influence on, the points of your mission, it would be unnecessary for me to touch upon any of them in this letter, was it not for the presumption that the insurrection in the western counties of this State has excited much speculation, and a variety of opinions abroad, and will be represented differently according to the wishes of some and the prejudices of others, who may exhibit it as an evidence of what has been predicted, "that we are unable to govern ourselves." Under this view of the subject, I am happy in giving it to you as the general opinion, that this event having happened at the time it did was fortunate, although it will be attended with considerable expense.

That the self-created societies, which have spread themselves over this country, have been laboring incessantly to sow the seeds of distrust, jealousy,

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whose names will be execrated for, and the service disgraced by such conduct."—*Washington to Hamilton*, 26 October, 1794. This letter was written while Washington was on the way from Bedford to Philadelphia.

"Press the governor to be pointed in ordering the officers under their respective commands to march back with their respective corps; and to see that the inhabitants meet with no disgraceful insults or injuries from them."—*Washington to Hamilton*, 31 October, 1794.

and of course discontent, thereby hoping to effect some revolution in the government, is not unknown to you. That they have been the fomenters of the western disturbances admits of no doubt in the mind of any one, who will examine their conduct; but fortunately they have precipitated a crisis for which they were not prepared, and thereby have unfolded views, which will, I trust, effectuate their annihilation sooner than it might otherwise have happened; at the same time that it has afforded an occasion for the people of this country to show their abhorrence of the result, and their attachment to the constitution and the laws; for I believe that five times the number of militia, that was required, would have come forward, if it had been necessary, in support of them.

The spirit, which blazed out on this occasion, as soon as the object was fully understood, and the lenient measures of the government were made known to the people, deserves to be communicated. There are instances of general officers going at the head of a single troop, and of light companies; of field-officers, when they came to the places of rendezvous, and found no command for them in that grade, turning into the ranks and proceeding as private soldiers, under their own captains; and of numbers, possessing the first fortunes in the country, standing in the ranks as private men, and marching day by day with their knapsacks and haversacks at their backs, sleeping on straw with a single blanket in a soldier's tent, during the frosty nights, which we have had, by way of ex-

ample to others—nay more, many young Quakers, not discouraged by the elders, of the first families, character, and property, having turned into the ranks and are marching with the troops.

These things have terrified the insurgents, who had no conception that such a spirit prevailed, but, while the thunder only rumbled at a distance, were boasting of their strength, and wishing for and threatening the militia by turns; intimating that the arms they should take from them would soon become a magazine in their hands. Their language is much changed indeed, but their principles want correction.

I shall be more prolix in my speech to Congress on the commencement and progress of this insurrection, than is usual in such an instrument, or than I should have been on any other occasion; but, as numbers at home and abroad will hear of the insurrection, and will read the speech, that may know nothing of the documents to which it might refer, I conceived it would be better to encounter the charge of prolixity by giving a cursory detail of facts, that would show the prominent features of the thing, than to let it go naked into the world, to be dressed up according to the fancy or inclination of the readers, or the policy of our enemies. * * *

SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, NOVEMBER 19, 1794

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

When we call to mind the gracious indulgence of Heaven, by which the American people became a nation; when we survey the general prosperity of our country, and look forward to the riches, power, and happiness to which it seems destined; with the deepest regret do I announce to you, that, during your recess, some of the citizens of the United States have been found capable of an insurrection. It is due, however, to the character of our government, and to its stability, which cannot be shaken by the enemies of order, freely to unfold the course of this event.

During the session of the year 1790, it was expedient to exercise the legislative power, granted by the constitution of the United States, "to lay and collect excises." In a majority of the States, scarcely an objection was made to this mode of taxation. In some, indeed, alarms were at first conceived, until they were banished by reason and patriotism. In the four western counties of Pennsylvania, a prejudice, fostered and embittered by the artifice of men, who labored for an ascendency over the will of others by the guidance of their passions, produced symptoms of riot and violence. It is well known, that Congress did not hesitate to examine the complaints which were presented, and to relieve them, as far as justice dictated, or

general convenience would permit. But the impression which this moderation made on the discontented, did not correspond with what it deserved; the arts of delusion were no longer confined to the efforts of designing individuals.

The very forbearance to press prosecutions was misinterpreted into a fear of urging the execution of the laws; and associations of men began to denounce threats against the officers employed. From a belief, that, by a more formal concert, their operation might be defeated, certain self-created societies assumed the tone of condemnation. Hence, while the greater part of Pennsylvania itself were conforming themselves to the acts of excise, a few counties were resolved to frustrate them. It was now perceived, that every expectation from the tenderness, which had hitherto been pursued, was unavailing, and that further delay could only create an opinion of impotency or irresolution in the government. Legal process was, therefore, delivered to the marshal, against the rioters and delinquent distillers.

No sooner was he understood to be engaged in this duty, than the vengeance of armed men was aimed at *his* person, and the person and property of the inspector of the revenue. They fired upon the marshal, arrested him, and detained him for some time as a prisoner. He was obliged, by the jeopardy of his life, to renounce the service of other process on the west side of the Allegany Mountain; and a deputation was afterwards sent to him to demand a surrender of that which he *had*

served. A numerous body repeatedly attacked the house of the inspector, seized his papers of office, and finally destroyed, by fire, his buildings, and whatsoever they contained. Both of these officers, from a just regard to their safety, fled to the seat of government; it being avowed, that the motives to such outrages were to compel the resignation of the inspector, to withstand, by force of arms, the authority of the United States, and thereby to extort a repeal of the laws of excise, and an alteration in the conduct of government.

Upon the testimony of these facts, an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States notified to me, that "in the counties of Washington and Allegany, in Pennsylvania, laws of the United States were opposed, and the execution thereof obstructed, by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in the marshal of that district." On this call, momentous in the extreme, I sought and weighed what might best subdue the crisis. On the one hand, the judiciary was pronounced to be stripped of its capacity to enforce the laws; crimes, which reached the very existence of social order, were perpetrated without control; the friends of government were insulted, abused, and overawed into silence or an apparent acquiescence; and to yield to the treasonable fury of so small a portion of the United States would be to violate the fundamental principle of our constitution, which enjoins, that the will of the majority shall prevail. On the other, to array

citizen against citizen, to publish the dishonor of such excesses, to encounter the expense and other embarrassments of so distant an expedition, were steps too delicate, too closely interwoven with many affecting considerations, to be lightly adopted. I postponed, therefore, the summoning of the militia immediately into the field; but I required them to be held in readiness, that if my anxious endeavors to reclaim the deluded, and to convince the malignant of their danger, should be fruitless, military force might be prepared to act, before the season should be too far advanced.

My proclamation of the 7th of August last was accordingly issued, and accompanied by the appointment of commissioners, who were charged to repair to the scene of insurrection. They were authorized to confer with any bodies of men, or individuals. They were instructed to be candid and explicit, in stating the sensations which had been excited in the executive, and his earnest wish to avoid a resort to coercion; to represent, however, that, without submission, coercion must be the resort; but to invite them, at the same time, to return to the demeanor of faithful citizens, by such accommodations as lay within the sphere of the executive power. Pardon, too, was tendered to them by the government of the United States, and that of Pennsylvania, upon no other condition, than a satisfactory assurance of obedience to the laws.

Although the report of the commissioners marks their firmness and abilities, and must unite all

virtuous men, by showing that the means of conciliation have been exhausted; all of those, who had committed or abetted the tumults, did not subscribe the mild form, which was proposed as the atonement; and the indications of a peaceable temper were neither sufficiently general nor conclusive to recommend or warrant a further suspension of the march of the militia.

Thus the painful alternative could not be discarded. I ordered the militia to march, after once more admonishing the insurgents, in my proclamation of the 25th of September last.

It was a task too difficult to ascertain, with precision, the lowest degree of force competent to the quelling of the insurrection. From a respect, indeed, to economy and the ease of my fellow-citizens belonging to the militia, it would have gratified me to accomplish such an estimate. My very reluctance to ascribe too much importance to the opposition, had its extent been accurately seen, would have been a decided inducement to the smallest efficient numbers. In this uncertainty, therefore, I put in motion fifteen thousand men, as being an army, which, according to all human calculation, would be prompt, and adequate in every view, and might perhaps, by rendering resistance desperate, prevent the effusion of blood. Quotas had been assigned to the States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia; the governor of Pennsylvania having declared on this occasion an opinion which justified a requisition to the other States.

As Commander-in-chief of the militia, when called into the actual service of the United States, I have visited the places of general rendezvous, to obtain more exact information, and to direct a plan for ulterior movements. Had there been room for a persuasion, that the laws were secure from obstruction; that the civil magistrate was able to bring to justice such of the most culpable, as have not embraced the proffered terms of amnesty, and may be deemed fit objects of example; that the friends of peace and good government were not in need of that aid and countenance, which they ought always to receive, and I trust ever will receive, against the vicious and turbulent, I should have caught with avidity the opportunity of restoring the militia to their families and home. But succeeding intelligence has tended to manifest the necessity of what has been done; it being now confessed, by those who were not inclined to exaggerate the ill conduct of the insurgents, that their malevolence was not pointed merely to a particular law, but that a spirit inimical to all order has actuated many of the offenders. If the state of things had afforded reason for the continuance of my presence with the army, it would not have been withholden; but, every appearance assuring such an issue as will redound to the reputation and strength of the United States, I have judged it most proper to resume my duties at the seat of government, leaving the chief command with the governor of Virginia.

Still, however, as it is probable, that, in a com-

motion like the present, whatsoever may be the pretence, the purposes of mischief and revenge may not be laid aside; the stationing of a small force for a certain period, in the four western counties of Pennsylvania, will be indispensable, whether we contemplate the situation of those who are connected with the execution of the laws, or of others, who may have exposed themselves by an honorable attachment to them.

Thirty days from the commencement of this session being the legal limitation of the employment of the militia, Congress cannot be too early occupied with this subject.

Among the discussions, which may arise from this aspect of our affairs, and from the documents which will be submitted to Congress, it will not escape their observation, that not only the inspector of the revenue, but other officers of the United States in Pennsylvania, have, from their fidelity in the discharge of their functions, sustained material injuries to their property. The obligation and policy of indemnifying them are strong and obvious. It may also merit attention, whether policy will not enlarge this provision to the retribution of other citizens, who, though not under the ties of office, may have suffered damage by their generous exertions for upholding the constitution and the laws. The amount, even if all the injured were included, would not be great; and, on future emergencies, the government would be amply repaid by the influence of an example, that he who incurs a loss

in its defence shall find a recompense in its liberality.[1]

While there is cause to lament, that occurrences of this nature should have disgraced the name, or interrupted the tranquillity, of any part of our community, or should have diverted to a new application any portion of the public resources, there are not wanting real and substantial consolations for the misfortune. It has demonstrated, that our prosperity rests on solid foundations; by furnishing an additional proof, that my fellow-citizens understand the true principles of government and liberty; that they feel their inseparable union; that, notwithstanding all the devices, which have been used to sway them from their interest and duty, they are now as ready to maintain the authority of the laws against licentious invasions, as they were

[1] It is instructive to contrast Washington's plain recital of the origin and progress of the Whiskey Insurrection with Jefferson's distorted account of the same events:

"The servile copyist of Mr. Pitt, thought he too must have his alarms, his insurrections and plots against the Constitution. Hence the incredible fact that the freedom of association, of conversation and of the press, should in the 5th year of our government have been attacked under the form of a denunciation of the democratic societies, a measure which even England, as boldly as she is advancing to the establishment of an absolute monarchy, has not yet been bold enough to attempt. Hence too the example of employing military force for civil purposes, when it has been impossible to produce a single fact of insurrection, unless that term be entirely confounded with occasional riots, and when the ordinary process of law had been resisted indeed in a few special cases, but by no means generally, nor had its effect been duly tried. But it aroused the favorite purposes of strengthening government and increasing the public debt; and therefore an insurrection was announced and proclaimed and armed against and marched

to defend their rights against usurpation. It has been a spectacle, displaying to the highest advantage the value of republican government, to behold the most and least wealthy of our citizens standing in the same ranks as private soldiers; preëminently distinguished by being the army of the constitution; undeterred by a march of three hundred miles over rugged mountains, by the approach of an inclement season, or by any other discouragement. Nor ought I to omit to acknowledge the efficacious and patriotic co-operation, which I have experienced from the chief magistrates of the States to which my requisitions have been addressed.

To every description, indeed, of citizens, let praise be given; but let them persevere in their affectionate vigilance over that precious depository of American happiness, the constitution of the

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against, but could never be found. And all this under the sanction of a name which has done too much good not to be sufficient to cover harm also. And what is equally astonishing is that by the pomp of reports, proclamations, armies, &c, the mind of the legislature itself was so fascinated as never to have asked where, when and by whom has this insurrection been produced? The original of this scene in another country was calculated to excite the indignation of those whom it could not impose on: the mimicry of it here is too humiliating to excite any feeling but shame. Our comfort is that the public sense is coming right on the general principles of republicanism, and that its success in France puts it out of danger here."—*Jefferson to Monroe*, 26 May, 1795.

"The insurgents are alarmed, but not yet brought to their proper senses. Every means is devised by them and their friends and associates elsewhere to induce a belief, that there is no necessity for troops crossing the mountains; although we have information, at the same time, that part of the people there are obliged to embody themselves to repel the insults of another part."—*Washington to Randolph*, 9 October, 1794.

United States. Let them cherish it, too, for the sake of those, who, from every clime, are daily seeking a dwelling in our land. And when, in the calm moments of reflection, they shall have retraced the origin and progress of the insurrection, let them determine, whether it has not been fomented by combinations of men, who, careless of consequences, and disregarding the unerring truth, that those who rouse, cannot always appease, a civil convulsion, have disseminated, from an ignorance or perversion of facts, suspicions, jealousies, and accusations of the whole government.

Having thus fulfilled the engagement, which I took, when I entered into office, "to the best of my ability to preserve, protect, and defend the constitution of the United States," on you, Gentlemen, and the people by whom you are deputed, I rely for support.[1] * * *

TO EDMUND PENDLETON

PHILADELPHIA, 22 January, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

* * * I hope and believe, that the spirit of

[1] Washington's policy in dealing with the insurrection in Pennsylvania was warmly commended by the Senate and the House in their replies to this message. See Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, i., 168-171.

"As I expected, and as you were informed the result would probably be, so it has happened; that the Western insurrection has terminated highly honorable for this country, which by the energy of its Laws, and the good disposition of its citizens, have brought the rioters to a perfect sense of their misconduct, without shedding a drop of blood. In the eyes of foreigners among us, this affair stands in a high point of view."—*Washington to Jay*, 18 December, 1794.

anarchy in the western counties of this State, (to quell which the force of the Union was called for,) is entirely subdued; and although, to effect it, the community has been saddled with a considerable expense, yet I trust no money would have been more advantageously expended, both as it respects the internal peace and welfare of this country, and the impression it will make on others. The spirit with which the militia turned out in support of the constitution and the laws of our country, at the same time that it does them immortal honor, is the most conclusive refutation, that could have been given to the assertions of Lord Sheffield, that, without the protection of Great Britain, we should be unable to govern ourselves, and would soon be involved in confusion. They will see, that republicanism is not the phantom of a deluded imagination. On the contrary, that, under no form of government, will laws be better supported, liberty and property better secured, or happiness be more effectually dispensed to mankind.

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5. The Settlement of the West

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

HEAD QUARTERS, NEWBURG,
17 June, 1783.

SIR:

I have the honor of transmitting to your Excellency for the consideration of Congress, a Pe-

tition from a large number of Officers of the Army in behalf of themselves, and such other Officers and Soldiers of the Continental Army as are entitled to rewards in lands, and may choose to avail themselves of any Priviledges and Grants which shall be obtained in consequence of the present solicitation—I enclose also the Copy of a Letter from Brigr. General Putnam in which the sentiments and expectations of the Petitioners are more fully explained; and in which the ideas of occupying the Posts in the Western Country will be found to correspond very nearly with those I have some time since communicated to a Committee of Congress, in treating of the subject of a Peace Establishment.—I will beg leave to make a few more observations on the general benefits of the Location and Settlement now proposed; and then submit the justice & policy of the measure to the wisdom of Congress.

Altho' I pretend not myself to determine how far the district of unsettled Country which is described in the Petition is free from the claim of every State, or how far this disposal of it may interfere with the views of Congress, yet it appears to me this is the Tract which from its local position and peculiar advantages ought to be first settled in preference to any other whatever, and I am perfectly convinced that it cannot be so advantageously settled by any other class of men as by the disbanded Officers and Soldiers of the Army —to whom the faith of Government hath long since been pledged, that lands should be granted

at the expiration of the War, in certain proportions agreeably to their respective grades.

I am induced to give my sentiments thus freely on the advantages to be expected from this plan of Colonization—because it would connect our Governments with the frontiers, extend our settlements progressively—and plant a brave, a hardy, & respectable Race of People as our advanced [guard?,] who would be always ready & willing (in case of hostility) to combat the Savages, and check their incursions—A Settlement formed of such Men would give security to our frontiers—the very name of it would awe the Indians—and more than probably prevent the murder of many innocent Families, which frequently in the usual mode of extending our Settlements & Encroachments on the hunting grounds of the Natives, fall the hapless Victims to savage barbarity—Besides the emoluments which might be derived from the Peltry Trade at our Factories, if such should be established; the appearance of so formidable a Settlement in the vicinity of their towns (to say nothing of the barrier it would form against our other Neighbors) would be the most likely means to enable us to purchase upon equitable terms of the Aborigines their right of preoccupancy; and to induce them to relinquish our Territories, and to remove into the illimitable regions of the West.

Much more might be said of the public utility of such a Location, as well as of the private felicity it would afford to the Individuals concerned in it—I will venture to say—it is the most rational &

practicable Scheme which can be adopted by a great proportion of the Officers & Soldiers of our Army, and promises them more happiness than they can expect in any other way.

The Settlers being in the prime of life, inured to hardship & taught by experience to accommodate themselves in every situation—going in a considerable body, and under the patronage of Government, would enjoy in the first instance *advantages* in procuring subsistence and all the necessaries for a comfortable beginning, superior to any common class of Emigrants & quite unknown to those who have heretofore extended themselves beyond the Apalachian Mountains. They may expect after a little perseverance, *Competence & Independence* for themselves, a pleasant retreat in old age—and the fairest prospects for their children. I have &c.

TO JAMES DUANE, IN CONGRESS

ROCKY HILL, 7 September, 1783.

SIR,

I have carefully perused the papers, which you put into my hands, relative to Indian affairs. My Sentiments, with respect to the proper line of conduct to be observed towards these people, coincide precisely with those delivered by Genl. Schuyler, so far as he has gone, in his Letter of the 29th July to Congress (which, with the other Papers, is herewith returned), and for the reasons he has there assigned; a repetition of them therefore by

me would be unnecessary. But, independent of the arguments made use of by him, the following considerations have no small weight in my mind.

To suffer a wide-extended Country to be overrun with Land Jobbers, speculators, and monopolizers, or even with scattered settlers, is in my opinion inconsistent with that wisdom and policy, which our true interest dictates, or that an enlightened people ought to adopt; and, besides, is pregnant of disputes both with the Savages and among ourselves, the evils of which are easier to be conceived than described. And for what, but to aggrandize a few avaricious men, to the prejudice of many and the embarrassment of Government? For the People engaged in these pursuits, without contributing in the smallest degree to the support of Government, or considering themselves as amenable to its Laws, will involve it, by their unrestrained conduct, in inextricable perplexities, and more than probably in a great deal of bloodshed.

My ideas, therefore, of the line of conduct proper to be observed, not only towards the Indians, but for the government of the Citizens of America, in their Settlement of the Western Country, (which is intimately connected therewith,) are simply these.

First, and as a preliminary, that all prisoners, of whatever age or sex, among the Indians, shall be delivered up.

That the Indians should be informed, that after a Contest of eight years for the Sovereignty of this

Country, Great Britain has ceded all the lands to the United States within the limits described by the—articles of the provisional treaty.

That as they (the Indians), maugre all the advice and admonition which could be given them at the commencement and during the prosecution of the war, could not be restrained from acts of hostility, but were determined to join their arms to those of G. Britain and to share their fortunes, so consequently, with a less generous people than Americans, they would be made to share the same fate, and be compelled to retire along with them beyond the Lakes. But, as we prefer Peace to a state of Warfare; as we consider them as a deluded People; as we persuade ourselves that they are convinced, from experience, of their error in taking up the Hatchet against us, and that their true Interest and safety must now depend upon *our* friendship; as the Country is large enough to contain us all; and as we are disposed to be kind to them and to partake of their Trade, we will, from these considerations and from motives of compassion, draw a veil over what is past, and establish a boundary line between them and us, beyond which we will *endeavor* to restrain our People from Hunting or Settling, and within which they shall not come but for the purposes of Trading, Treating, or other business unexceptionable in its nature.

In establishing this line, in the first instance, care should be taken neither to yield nor to grasp at too much; but to endeavor to impress the Indians

with an idea of the generosity of our disposition to accommodate them, and with the necessity we are under, of providing for our warriors, our Young People who are growing up, and strangers who are coming from other Countries to live among us, and if they should make a point of it, or appear dissatisfied with the line we may find it necessary to establish, compensation should be made for their claims within it.

It is needless for me to express more explicitly, because the tendency of my observns. evinces it is my opinion, that, if the legislature of the State of New York should insist upon expelling the Six Nations from all the Country they Inhabited previous to the war, within their Territory, (as General Schuyler seems to be apprehensive of,) it will end in another Indian war. I have every reason to believe from my inquiries, and the information I have received, that they will not suffer their Country (if it were our policy to take it before we could settle it) to be wrested from them without another struggle. That they would compromise for a part of it, I have very little doubt; and that it would be the cheapest way of coming at it, I have no doubt at all. The same observations, I am persuaded, will hold good with respect to Virginia, or any other State, which has powerful tribes of Indians on their Frontiers; and the reason of my mentioning New York is because General Schuyler has expressed his opinion of the temper of its Legislature, and because I have been more in the way of learning the sentimts. of the Six

Nations than of any other Tribes of Indians on this Subject.

The limits being sufficiently extensive, in the new ctry., to comply with all the engagements of government, and to admit such emigrations as may be supposed to happen within a given time, not only from the several States of the Union but from Foreign Countries, and, moreover, of such magnitude as to form a distinct and proper government; a Proclamation, in my opinion, should issue, making it Felony (if there is power for the purpose, if not, imposing some very heavy restraint) for any person to Survey or Settle beyond the Line; and the Officers commanding the Frontier Garrisons should have pointed and peremptory orders to see that the Proclamation is carried into effect.

Measures of this sort would not only obtain Peace from the Indians, but would, in my opinion, be the means of preserving it. It would dispose of the Land to the best advantage, People the Country progressively, and check land jobbing and monopolizing, which are now going forward with great avidity, while the door would be open and terms known for every one to obtain what is reasonable and proper for himself, upon legal and constitutional ground.

Every advantage, that could be expected or even wished for, would result from such a mode of procedure. Our settlements would be compact, government well established, and our barrier formidable, not only for ourselves but against our

neighs.; and the Indians, as has been observed in Genl. Schuyler's letter, will ever retreat as our settlements advance upon them, and they will be as ready to sell, as we are to buy. That it is the cheapest, as well as the least distressing way of dealing with them, none, who is acquainted with the nature of an Indian warfare, and has ever been at the trouble of estimating the expense of one, and comparing it with the cost of purchasing their Lands, will hesitate to acknowledge.

Unless some such measures, as I have here taken the liberty of suggesting, are speedily adopted, one of two capital evils, in my opinion, will inevitably result, and is near at hand; either that the settling, or rather overspreading, of the western Country will take place by a parcel of Banditti, who will bid defiance to all authority, while they are skimming and disposing of the Cream of the Country at the expense of many suffering officers and soldiers, who have fought and bled to obtain it, and are now waiting the decision of Congress to point them to the promised reward of their past dangers and toils; or a renewal of Hostilities with the Indians, brought about more than probably by this very means.

How far agents for Indian affrs. are indispensably necessary, I shall not take upon me to decide; but, if any should be appointed, their powers should be circumscribed, accurately defined, and themselves rigidly punished for every infraction of them. A recurrence to the conduct of these people, under the British administration of Indian affairs, will

manifest the propriety of this caution, as it will be there found that self-Interest was the principle by which their agents was actuated; and to promote this by accumulating Lands and passing large quantities of goods thro' their hands, the Indians were made to speak any language they pleased by their representation, and were pacific or hostile as their purposes were most likely to be promoted by the one or the other. No purchase under any pretence whatever should be made by any other authority than that of the sovereign power, or the Legislature of the State in which such Lands may happen to be; nor should the agents be permitted directly or indirectly to trade, but to have a fixed and ample Salary allowed them, as a full compensation for their trouble.

Whether in practice the measure may answer as well as it appears in theory to me, I will not undertake to say; but I think, if the Indian Trade was carried on, on government acct. and with no greater advance than what would be necessary to defray the expense and risk, and bring in a small profit, that it would supply the Indians upon much easier terms than they usually are, engross their Trade, and fix them strongly in our Interest, and would be a much better mode of treating them, than that of giving presents, where a few only are benefited by them. I confess there is difficulty in getting a man, or set of men, in whose abilities and integrity there can be a perfect reliance, without which the scheme is liable to such abuse as to defeat the salutary ends, which are proposed from

it. At any rate, no person should be suffered to Trade with the Indians without first obtaining a license, and giving security to conform to such Rules and Regulations as shall be prescribed, as was the case before the war.

In giving my sentiments in the month of May last (at the request of a Committee of Congress) on a Peace Establishmt., I took the liberty of suggesting the propriety, which in my opinion there appeared, of paying particular attention to the French and other settlers at Detroit and other parts within the limits of the western Country. The perusal of a late pamphlet, entitled "Observations on the Commerce of the American States with Europe and the West Indies," impresses the necessity of it more forcibly than ever on my mind. The author of that Piece strongly recommends a liberal change in the government of Canada; and, tho' he is too sanguine in his expectations of the benefits arising from it, there can be no doubt of the good policy of the measure. It behoves us, therefore, to counteract them by anticipation. These People have a disposition towards us susceptible of favorable impressions; but, as no arts will be left unattempted by the B. to withdraw them from our Interest, the prest, moment should be employed by us to fix them in it, or we may lose them for ever, and with them the advantages or disadvantages consequent of the choice they may make. From the best information and maps of that Country it would appear, that the territory from the mouth of the Great Miami River, wch.

empties into the Ohio, to its confluence with the Mad River, thence by a Line to the Miami fort and Village on the other Miami River, wch. empties into Lake Erie, and Thence by a Line to include the Settlement of Detroit, would, with Lake Erie to the noward, Pensa. to the Eastwd., and the Ohio to the soward, form a governmt. sufficiently extensive to fulfil all the public engagements, and to receive moreover a large population by Emigrants; and to confine the Settlement of the new State within these bounds would, in my opinion, be infinitely better, even supposing no disputes were to happen with the Indians, and that it was not necessary to guard against these other evils which have been enumerated, than to suffer the same number of People to roam over a Country of at least 500,000 Square miles, contributing nothing to the support, but much perhaps to the embarrassment, of the Federal Government.

Was it not for the purpose of comprehending the Settlement of Detroit within the Jurisdn. of the new Governmt., a more compact and better shaped district for a State would be, for the line to proceed from the Miami Fort and Village along the River of that name to Lake Erie; leaving in that case the settlement of Detroit, and all the Territory no. of the Rivers Miami and St. Joseph's between the Lakes Erie, St. Clair, Huron, and Michigan, to form hereafter another State equally large, compact, and water-bounded.[1]

[1] The boundaries here suggested by Washington roughly outline the present States of Ohio and Michigan.

At first view it may seem a little extraneous, when I am called upon to give an opinion upon the terms of a Peace proper to be made with the Indians, that I should go into the formation of New States. But the Settlemt. of the Western Country, and making a Peace with the Indians, are so analogous, that there can be no definition of the one, without involving considerations of the other; for, I repeat it again, and I am clear in my opinion, that policy and œconomy point very strongly to the expediency of being upon good terms with the Indians, and the propriety of purchasing their Lands in preference to attempting to drive them by force of arms out of their Country; which, as we have already experienced, is like driving the wild Beasts of ye forest, which will return as soon as the pursuit is at an end, and fall perhaps upon those that are left there; when the gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage, as the wolf, to retire; both being beasts of prey, tho' they differ in shape. In a word, there is nothing to be obtained by an Indian war, but the soil they live on, and this can be had by purchase at less expense, and without that bloodshed and those distresses, which helpless women and children are made partakers of in all kinds of disputes with them.

If there is any thing in these thoughts, (which I have fully and freely communicated,) worthy of attention, I shall be happy, and am, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant.

P. S. A formal Address and Memorial from

the Oneita Indians when I was on the Mohawk River, setting forth their Grievances and distresses and praying relief, induced me to order a pound of Powder and 3 pounds of Lead to be issued to each man from the Military Magazines in the care of Colo. Willett—This I presume was unknown to Genl. Schuyler at the time he recommended the like measure in his Letter to Congress.

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

MOUNT VERNON, 10 October, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Upon my return from the western country a few days ago, I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 17th ultimo. It has always been my intention to pay my respects to you, before the chance of another *early and hard* winter should make a warm fireside too comfortable to be relinquished. And I shall feel an additional pleasure in offering this tribute of friendship and respect to you, by having the company of the Marquis de Lafayette, when he shall have revisited this place from his eastern tour, now every day to be expected.

I shall take the liberty now, my dear Sir, to suggest a matter, which would (if I am not too short-sighted a politician) mark your administration as an important era in the annals of this country, if it should be recommended by you and adopted by the Assembly.

It has long been my decided opinion, that the shortest, easiest, and least expensive communication

with the invaluable and extensive country back of us would be by one or both of the rivers of this State, which have their sources in the Apalachian mountains. Nor am I singular in this opinion. Evans, in his Map and Analysis of the Middle Colonies, which, considering the early period at which they were given to the public, are done with amazing exactness, and Hutchins since, in his Topographical Description of the western country, (a good part of which is from actual surveys,) are decidedly of the same sentiments; as indeed are all others, who have had opportunities, and have been at the pains, to investigate and consider the subject.

But that this may not now stand as mere matter of opinion or assertion, unsupported by facts (such at least as the best maps now extant, compared with the oral testimony, which my opportunities in the course of the war have enabled me to obtain), I shall give you the different routs and distances from Detroit, by which all the trade of the northwestern parts of the united territory must pass; unless the Spaniards, contrary to their present policy, should engage part of it, or the British should attempt to force nature, by carrying the trade of the Upper Lakes by the River Utawas into Canada, which I scarcely think they will or could effect. Taking Detroit then (which is putting ourselves in as unfavorable a point of view as we can be well placed, because it is upon the line of the British territory,) as a point by which, as I have already observed, all that part of the trade must come, it appears from the statement enclosed, that the tide waters of this

State are nearer to it by one hundred and sixty-eight miles, than that of the River St. Lawrence; or than that of the Hudson at Albany, by one hundred and seventy-six miles.

Maryland stands upon similar ground with Virginia. Pennsylvania, although the Susquehanna is an unfriendly water, much impeded, it is said, with rocks and rapids, and nowhere communicating with those, which lead to her capital, has it in contemplation to open a communication between Toby's Creek, which empties into the Allegany River ninety-five miles above Fort Pitt, and the west branch of Susquehanna, and to cut a canal between the waters of the latter and the Schuylkill; the expense of which is easier to be conceived, than estimated or described by me. A people, however, who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages, may achieve almost any thing. In the mean time, under the uncertainty of these undertakings, they are smoothing the roads and paving the ways for the trade of that western world. That New York will do the same so soon as the British garrisons are removed, which are at present insurmountable obstacles in *their* way, no person, who knows the temper, genius, and policy of those people as well as I do, can harbor the smallest doubt.

Thus much with respect to rival States. Let me now take a short view of our own; and, being aware of the objections which are in the way, I will, in order to contrast them, enumerate them with the advantages.

The first and principal one is, the *unfortunate jealousy,* which ever has, and it is to be feared ever will prevail, lest one part of the State should obtain an advantage over the other parts, (as if the benefits of the trade were not diffusive and beneficial to all). Then follows a train of difficulties, namely, that our people are already heavily taxed; that we have no money; that the advantages of this trade are remote; that the most direct route for it is through other States, over whom we have no control; that the routes over which we have control are as distant as either of those which lead to Philadelphia, Albany, or Montreal; that a sufficient spirit of commerce does not pervade the citizens of this commonwealth; and that we are in fact doing for others, what they ought to do for themselves.

Without going into the investigation of a question, which has employed the pens of able politicians, namely, whether trade with foreigners is an advantage or disadvantage to a country, this State, as a part of the confederated States, all of whom have the spirit of it very strongly working within them, must adopt it, or submit to the evils arising therefrom without receiving its benefits. Common policy, therefore, points clearly and strongly to the propriety of our enjoying all the advantages, which nature and our local situation afford us; and evinces clearly, that, unless this spirit could be totally eradicated in other States as well as in this, and every man be made to become either a cultivator of the land or a manufacturer of such articles as are prompted by necessity, such stimulus should

be employed as will *force* this spirit, by showing to our countrymen the superior advantages we possess beyond others, and the importance of being upon a footing with our neighbors.

If this is fair reasoning, it ought to follow as a consequence, that we should do our part towards opening the communication with the fur and peltry trade of the Lakes, and for the produce of the country which lies within, and which will, so soon as matters are settled with the Indians, and the terms on which Congress mean to dispose of the land, found to be favorable, are announced, be settled faster than any other ever did, or any one would imagine. This, then, when considered in an interested point of view, is alone sufficient to excite our endeavors. But in my opinion there is a political consideration for so doing, which is of still greater importance.

I need not remark to you, Sir, that the flanks and rear of the United States are possessed by other powers, and formidable ones too; nor how necessary it is to apply the cement of interest to bind all parts of the Union together by indissoluble bonds, especially that part of it, which lies immediately west of us, with the middle States. For what ties, let me ask, should we have upon those people? How entirely unconnected with them shall we be, and what troubles may we not apprehend, if the Spaniards on their right, and Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing stumbling-blocks in their way, as they now do, should hold out lures for their trade and alliance? What, when they get

strength, which will be sooner than most people conceive (from the emigration of foreigners, who will have no particular predilection towards us, as well as from the removal of our own citizens), will be the consequence of their having formed close connexions with both or either of those powers, in a commercial way? It needs not, in my opinion, the gift of prophecy to foretell.

The western settlers (I speak now from my own observation) stand as it were upon a pivot. The touch of a feather would turn them any way. They have looked down the Mississippi, until the Spaniards, very impoliticly I think for themselves, threw difficulties in their way; and they looked that way for no other reason, than because they could glide gently down the stream; without considering, perhaps, the difficulties of the voyage back again, and the time necessary to perform it in; and because they have no other means of coming to us but by long land transportations and unimproved roads. These causes have hitherto checked the industry of the present settlers; for, except the demand for provisions, occasioned by the increase of population, and a little flour, which the necessities of the Spaniards compel them to buy, they have no incitements to labor. But smooth the road, and make easy the way for them, and then see what an influx of articles will be poured upon us; how amazingly our exports will be increased by them, and how amply we shall be compensated for any trouble and expense we may encounter to effect it

A combination of circumstance:

ent conjuncture more favorable for Virginia, than for any other State in the Union, to fix these matters. The jealous and untoward disposition of the Spaniards on one hand, and the private views of some individuals, coinciding with the general policy of the court of Great Britain on the other, to retain as long as possible the posts of Detroit, Niagara, and Oswego, &c., (which, though done under the letter of the treaty, is certainly an infraction of the spirit of it, and injurious to the Union,) may be improved to the greatest advantage by this State, if she would open the avenues to the trade of that country, and embrace the present moment to establish it. It only wants a beginning. The western inhabitants would do their part towards its execution. Weak as they are, they would meet us at least half way, rather than be driven into the arms of or be made dependent upon foreigners; which would eventually either bring on a separation of them from us, or a war between the United States and one or the other of those powers, most probably with the Spaniards.

The preliminary steps to the attainment of this great object would be attended with very little expense, and might at the same time that it served to attract the attention of the western country, and to convince the wavering inhabitants of our disposition to connect ourselves with them, and to facilitate their commerce with us, be a mean of removing those jealousies, which otherwise might take place among ourselves.

These, in my opinion, are to appoint commis-

sioners, who, from their situation, integrity, and abilities, can be under no suspicion of prejudice or predilection to one part more than to another. Let these commissioners make an actual survey of James River and Potomac from tide-water to their respective sources; note with great accuracy the kind of navigation and the obstructions in it, the difficulty and expense attending the removal of these obstructions, the distances from place to place through their whole extent, and the nearest and best portages between these waters and the streams capable of improvement, which run into the Ohio; traverse these in like manner to their junction with the Ohio, and with equal accuracy. The navigation of this river (i. e., the Ohio) being well known, they will have less to do in the examination of it; but, nevertheless, let the courses and distances be taken to the mouth of the Muskingum, and up that river (notwithstanding it is in the ceded lands) to the carrying-place to the Cayahoga; down the Cayahoga to Lake Erie; and thence to Detroit. Let them do the same with Big Beaver Creek, although part of it is in the State of Pennsylvania; and with the Scioto also. In a word, let the waters east and west of the Ohio, which invite our notice by their proximity, and by the ease with which land transportation may be had between them and the Lakes on one side, and the Rivers Potomac and James on the other, be explored, accurately delineated, and a correct and connected map of the whole be presented to the public. These things being done, I shall be mistaken if prejudice does not yield

to facts, jealousy to candor, and, finally, if reason and nature, thus aided, will not dictate what is right and proper to be done.

In the mean while, if it should be thought that the lapse of time, which is necessary to effect this work, may be attended with injurious consequences, could not there be a sum of money granted towards opening the best, or, if it should be deemed more eligible, two of the nearest communications (one to the northward and another to the southward) with the settlements to the westward; and an act be passed, if there should not appear a manifest disposition in the Assembly to make it a public undertaking, to incorporate and encourage private adventurers, if any should associate and solicit the same, for the purpose of extending the navigation of the Potomac or James River; and, in the former case, to request the concurrence of Maryland in the measure? It will appear from my statement of the different routes (and, as far as my means of information have extended, I have done it with the utmost candor), that all the produce of the settlements about Fort Pitt can be brought to Alexandria by the Youghiogany in three hundred and four miles, whereof only thirty-one is land transportation; and by the Monongahela and Cheat Rivers in three hundred and sixty miles, twenty of which only are land carriage. Whereas the common road from Fort Pitt to Philadelphia is three hundred and twenty miles, all land transportation; or four hundred and seventy-six miles, if the Ohio, Toby's Creek, Susquehanna, and Schuylkill are

made use of for this purpose. How much of this is by land, I know not; but, from the nature of the country, it must be very considerable. How much the interest and feelings of people thus circumstanced would be engaged to promote it, requires no illustration.

For my own part, I think it highly probable, that, upon the strictest scrutiny, if the Falls of the Great Kanhawa can be made navigable, or a short portage be had there, it will be found of equal importance and convenience to improve the navigation of both the James and Potomac. The latter, I am fully persuaded, affords the nearest communication with the Lakes; but James River may be more convenient for all the settlers below the mouth of the Great Kanhawa, and for some distance perhaps above and west of it; for I have no expectation, that any part of the trade above the Falls of the Ohio will go down that river and the Mississippi, much less that the returns will ever come up them, unless our want of foresight and good management is the occasion of it. Or, upon trial, if it should be found that these rivers, from the before-mentioned Falls, will admit the descent of sea-vessels, in which case, and the navigation of the former's becoming free, it is probable that both vessels and cargoes will be carried to foreign markets and sold; but the returns for them will never in the natural course of things ascend the long and rapid current of that river, which with the Ohio to the Falls, in their meanderings, is little if any short of two thousand miles. Upon the whole, the

object in my estimation is of vast commercial and political importance. In these lights I think posterity will consider it, and regret, (if our conduct should give them cause,) that the present favorable moment to secure so great a blessing for them was neglected.

One thing more remains, which I had like to have forgot, and that is, the supposed difficulty of obtaining a passage through the State of Pennsylvania. How an application to its legislature would be relished, in the first instance, I will not undertake to decide; but of one thing I am almost certain, such an application would place that body in a very delicate situation. There is in the State of Pennsylvania at least one hundred thousand souls west of Laurel Hill, who are groaning under the inconveniences of a long land transportation. They are wishing, indeed they are looking, for the improvement and extension of inland navigation; and, if this cannot be made easy for them to Philadelphia (at any rate it must be lengthy), they will seek a mart elsewhere; the consequence of which would be, that the State, though contrary to the interests of its sea-ports, must submit to the loss of so much of its trade, or hazard not only the loss of the trade but the loss of the settlement also; for an opposition on the part of government to the extension of water transportation, so consonant with the essential interests of a large body of people, or any extraordinary impositions upon the exports or imports to or from another State, would ultimately bring on a separation between its eastern and west-

ern settlements; towards which there is not wanting a disposition at this moment in that part of it beyond the mountains. I consider Rumsey's discovery for working boats against stream, by mechanical powers (principally), as not only a very fortunate invention for these States in general, but as one of those circumstances, which have combined to render the present epoch favorable above all others for fixing, if we are disposed to avail ourselves of them, a large portion of the trade of the western country in the bosom of this State irrevocably.

Long as this letter is, I intended to have written a fuller and more digested one, upon this important subject; but have met with so many interruptions since my return home, as almost to have precluded my writing at all. What I now give is crude; but if you are in sentiment with me, I have said enough; if there is not an accordance of opinion, I have said too much; and all I pray in the latter case is, that you will do me the justice to believe my motives are pure, however erroneous my judgment may be in this matter, and that I am, with the most perfect esteem and friendship,

Dear Sir, yours, &c.[1]

[1] This letter, which is one of the most important of Washington's writings, is remarkable for its prophetic insight into the future development of the West, and the necessity of opening trade routes over the mountains in order to give that section some reason for maintaining a political connection with the sea-board States. The specific canals which he contemplated never developed as he had hoped, but his idea of a comprehensive system of highways between the East and the West found a more perfect realization than he had ever dreamed of in the

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS

MOUNT VERNON, 25 July, 1785.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

* * * As the complexion of European politics seems now (by letters I have received from the Marquis de Lafayette, the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and others,) to have a tendency to peace, I will say nothing of war, nor make any animadversions upon the contending powers; otherwise I might possibly have said, that the retreat from it seemed impossible after the explicit declaration of the parties. My first wish is to see this plague to mankind banished from off the earth, and the sons and daughters of this world employed in more pleasing and innocent amusements, than in preparing implements and exercising them for the destruction of mankind. Rather than quarrel about territory, let the poor, the needy, and oppressed of the earth, and those who want land, resort to the fertile plains of our western country, the *second land of promise,* and there dwell in peace, fulfilling the first and great commandment. * * *

To reverberate European news would be idle, and we have little of domestic kind worthy of attention. We have held treaties with the Indians, but they were so unseasonably delayed, that these people, by our last accounts from the westward,

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construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, both of which followed routes that Washington himself had indicated as the best avenues of communication between the two sections.

are in a discontented mood, supposed by many to be instigated thereto by our late enemies (now, to be sure, *fast friend*), who, from any thing I can learn, under the indefinite expression of the treaty, hold and seem resolved to retain possession of our western posts. Congress have, also, after a long and tedious deliberation, passed an ordinance for laying off the western territory into States, and for disposing of the land; but in a manner and on terms, which few people in the southern States conceive can be accomplished. Both sides are sure, and the event is appealed to. Let time decide it. It is however to be regretted, that local politics and self-interested views obtrude themselves into every measure of public utility:—but to such characters be the consequences.

My attention is more immediately engaged in a project, which I think big with great political, as well as commercial consequences to these States, especially the middle ones; it is by removing the obstructions and extending the inland navigation of our rivers, to bring the States on the Atlantic in close connexion with those forming to the westward, by a short and easy transportation. Without this, I can easily conceive they will have different views, separate interests, and other connexions. I may be singular in my ideas, but they are these; that, to open a door to, and make easy the way for, those settlers to the westward (which ought to progress regularly and compactly) before we make any stir about the navigation of the Mississippi, and before our settlements are far

advanced towards that river, would be our true line of policy. It can, I think, be demonstrated, that the produce of the western territory, (if the navigations which are now in hand succeed, and of which I have no doubt,) as low down the Ohio as the Great Kanhawa, I believe to the Falls, and between the parts above and the Lakes, may be brought either to the highest shipping port on this or James river, at a less expense, with more ease, (including the return,) and in a much shorter time, than it can be carried to New Orleans, if the Spaniards, instead of restricting, were to throw open their ports and invite our trade. But if the commerce of that country should embrace this channel, and connexions be formed, experience has taught us, and there is a very recent proof with great Britain, how next to impracticable it is to divert it; and, if that should be the case, the Atlantic States, (especially as those to the westward will in a great degree fill with foreigners,) will be no more to the present Union, except to excite perhaps very justly our fears, than the country of California, which is still more to the westward, and belonging to another power.

Mrs. Washington presents her compliments to you, and with every wish for your happiness,

I am, my dear Humphreys, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

MOUNT VERNON, 25 July, 1785.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

* * * As the clouds which overspread your

hemisphere are dispersing, and peace with all its concomitants is dawning upon your Land, I will banish the sound of War from my letter:—I wish to see the sons and daughters of the world in Peace and busily employed in the more agreeable amusement of fulfilling the first and great commandment—*Increase and Multiply:* as an encouragement to which we have opened the fertile plains of the Ohio to the poor, the needy and the opressed of the Earth; any one therefore who is heavy laden or who wants land to cultivate, may repair thither & abound, as in the Land of promise, with milk and honey:—the ways are preparing, and the roads will be made easy, thro' the channels of Potomac & James river.

Speaking of these navigations, I have the pleasure to inform you that the subscriptions (especially for the first) at the surrender of the books, agreeably to the act which I enclosed you in my last, exceeded my most sanguine expectation:—for the latter, that is James river, no comparison of them has yet been made.—

Of the £50,000 Sterlg. required for the Potomac navigation, upwards of £40,000, was subjoined before the middle of May, and encreasing fast—a President & four Directors, consisting of your hble. servant, Govrs. Johnson and Lee of Maryland, and Colos. Fitzgerald and Gilpin of this State, were chosen to conduct the undertaking.—The first dividend of the money was paid in on the 15th of this month; and the work is to be begun the first of next, in those parts which require least skill,

leaving the more difficult 'till an Engineer of abilities and practical knowledge can be obtained; which reminds me of the question which I propounded to you in my last, on this subject, and on which I should be glad to learn your sentiments. This prospect, if it succeeds, and of which I have no doubt, will bring the Atlantic States and the Western Territory into close connexion, and be productive of very extensive commercial and political consequences; the last of *which* gave the spur to my exertions, as I could foresee many, and great mischiefs which would naturally result from a separation—and that a separation would inevitably take place, if the obstructions between the two countries remained, and the navigation of the Mississippi should be made free.[1] * * *

TO SAMUEL PURVIANCE, ESQ.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 March, 1786.

SIR,

Your Letter of the 6th instant, is this moment put into my hands; was it in my power I would

[1] "However singular the opinion may be, I cannot divest myself of it, that the navigation of the Mississippi, *at this time*, ought to be no object with us. On the contrary, until we have a little time allowed to open and make easy the ways between the Atlantic States and the western territory, the obstruction had better remain. There is nothing that binds one county or one State to another, but interest. Without this cement the western inhabitants, who more than probably will be composed in a great degree of foreigners, can have no predilection for us, and a commercial connexion is the only tie we can have upon them. It is clear to me, that the trade of the Lakes, and of the River Ohio, as low as the Great Kanhawa if not to the

cheerfully answer your queries respecting the settlements on the Kanhawa; the nature of the water and quality of the soil.

But of the first, I only know from information that Colo. Lewis is settled there, from his own mouth I learnt that it was his intention to do so, & to establish a Town in the fork of the two rivers, where he proposes to fix families in the vicinity on his own Lands. Of the second, I never could obtain any distinct account of the navigation. It has been variously represented; favorably by some,—extremely difficult by others, in its passage thro' the Gauley mountain, (which I presume is the Laurel hill)—but the uncertainty of this matter will now soon be at an end, as there are commissioners appointed by this State to explore the navigation of that river and the communication between it and James river, with a view to a portage. This, equally with the extension of the Potomac navigation, was part of my original plan, and equally urged by me to our Assembly; for my object was to connect the Western and Eastern or Atlantic States together by strong commercial ties.

Falls, may be brought to the Atlantic ports easier and cheaper, taking the *whole* voyage together, than it can be carried to New Orleans; but, once open the door to the latter before the obstructions are removed from the former, let commercial connexions, which lead to others, be formed, and the habit of that trade well established, and it will be found no easy matter to divert it; and *vice versa*. When the settlements are stronger and more extended to the westward, the navigation of the Mississippi will be an object of importance, and we shall then be able, (reserving our claims,) to speak a more efficacious language, than policy, I think, dictates at present."—*Washington to Richard Henry Lee*, 22 August, 1785.

I am a friend, therefore on this principle to every channel that can be opened, and wish the people to have choice.—The Kanhawa, and James river, if the obstacles in the former are not great, are certainly the shortest and best for the settlers thereon, for those on the Ohio below, above, perhaps as high as the little Kanhawa and for the Country immediately west of it.

The Monongahela and Yohoghaney with the Potomac are most convenient for all the settlers from the little Kanhawa, inclusively, to Fort Pitt and upwards, & west as far as the Lakes. Susquehanna and the Alleghany above Fort Pitt some distance, will accommodate a third District of Country; and may for ought I know be equally convenient to the trade of the Lakes. All of them therefore have my best wishes; for as I have observed already, my object & my aim are political. If we cannot bind those people to us by interest, and it is no otherwise to be effected but by a commercial knot, we shall be no more to them after a while, than G. Britain or Spain, and they may be as closely linked with one or other of those powers, as we wish them to be with us, and in that event, they may be a severe thorn in our side. * * *

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS

MOUNT VERNON, 18 June, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * The advantages, with which the inland navigation of the Rivers Potomac and James are

pregnant, must strike every mind that reasons upon the subject; but there is, I perceive, a diversity of sentiment respecting the benefits and the consequences, which may flow from the free and immediate use of the Mississippi. My opinion of this matter has been uniformly the same; and no light in which I have been able to consider the subject is likely to change it. It is, neither to relinquish nor to push our claim to this navigation, but in the mean while to open *all* the communications, which nature has afforded, between the Atlantic States and the western territory, and to encourage the use of them to the utmost. In my judgment it is a matter of very serious concern to the well-being of the former to make it the interest of the latter to trade with them; without which, the ties of consanguinity, which are weakening every day, will soon be no bond, and we shall be no more a few years hence to the inhabitants of that country, than the British and Spaniards are at this day; not so much, indeed, because commercial connexions, it is well known, lead to others, and united are difficult to be broken, and these must take place with the Spaniards, if the navigation of the Mississippi is opened.

Clear I am, that it would be for the interest of the western settlers, as low down the Ohio as the Big Kanhawa, and back to the Lakes, to bring their produce through one of the channels I have named; but the way must be cleared, and made easy and obvious to them, or else the ease with which people glide down stream will give a different bias to their thinking and acting. Whenever the new States

become so populous and so extended to the westward, as really to need it, there will be no power which can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi. Why then should we prematurely urge a matter, which is displeasing and may produce disagreeable consequences, if it is our interest to let it sleep? It may require some management to quiet the restless and impetuous spirits of Kentucky, of whose conduct I am more apprehensive in this business, than I am of all the opposition that will be given by the Spaniards.[1] Mrs. Washington & George and his wife join me in compliments and good wishes to your lady. With great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

[1] "With respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, you already know my sentiments thereon. They have been uniformly the same, and, as I have observed to you in a former letter, [18 June, 1786] are controverted by one consideration, only of weight, and that is, the operation which the conclusion of it may have on the minds of the western settlers, who will not consider the subject in a relative point of view, or on a comprehensive scale, and may be influenced by the demagogues of the country to acts of extravagance and desperation, under a popular declamation, that their interests are sacrificed. * * * But in all matters of great national moment, the only true line of conduct, in my opinion, is dispassionately to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the measures proposed, and decide from the balance. The lesser evil, where there is a choice of them, should always yield to the greater."—*Washington to Henry Lee*, 31 October, 1786.

"Gradually recovering from the distresses in which the war left us, patiently advancing in our task of civil government, unentangled in the crooked policies of Europe, wanting scarcely any thing but the free navigation of the Mississippi (which we must have, and as certainly shall have as we remain a nation), I have supposed, that, with the undeviating exercise of a just, steady, and prudent national policy, we shall be the gainers, whether the powers of the old world may be in peace

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE

PHILADELPHIA, 19 July, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I have had the honor to receive your favor of the 15th instant, and thank you for the ordinance which was enclosed in it. My sentiments, with respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, have been long fixed, and are not dissimilar to those, which are expressed in your letter. I have ever been of opinion, that the true policy of the Atlantic States, would be instead of contending prematurely for the free navigation of that river (which eventually, and perhaps as soon as it shall be our true interest to obtain it, must happen), to open and improve the natural communications with the western country, through which the produce of it might be transported with convenience and ease to our markets. Till you get low down the Ohio, I conceive, that it would, (considering the length of the voyage to New Orleans, the difficulty of the current, and the time necessary to perform it in,) be the interest of the inhabitants to bring their produce to our ports; and sure I am, there is no other tie by which they will long form a link in the chain of federal union. I believe, however, from the temper in which those people appear to be, and from the ambitious and turbulent spirit of some of their demagogues, that it has become a moot point to determine, (when every circumstance which attends this business is brought into view,) what is best to

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or war, but more especially in the latter case."—*Washington to Lafayette*, 11 August, 1790.

be done. The State of Virginia having taken the matter up with so high a hand, is not among the least embarrassing or disagreeable parts of the difficulty. * * *

I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

TO RICHARD HENDERSON [2]

MOUNT VERNON, 19 June, 1788.

SIR,

Your favor of the 5th instant was lodged at my house while I was absent on a visit to my mother. I am now taking the earliest opportunity of noticing its contents, and those of its enclosure. Willing as I am to give satisfaction, so far as I am

[1] Washington's feeling that the United States ought not to attempt to induce Spain to open the navigation of the Mississippi to western settlers until they had first established commercial connections with the sea-board States has been singularly misinterpreted by several historians. Draper says, "Even Washington, so late as 1784, did not think that the ownership of the Mississippi would be of benefit to the republic; but, on the contrary, was afraid that it might tend to separate the western country from the Atlantic States."—*History of the American Civil War*, i., 201. This statement is quoted approvingly by Von Holst, in his *Constitutional and Political History of the United States*, i., 17, and is frequently encountered elsewhere. Washington's language admits of no such construction. The navigation of the Mississippi, as he wrote Lafayette, is something that "we must have and as certainly shall have as we remain a nation," but to establish commercial connections between the western settlers and Spain before such connections had been formed with the States east of the Allegheny mountains was, in his opinion, to endanger the political ties which joined the two sections.

[2] A gentleman, who had forwarded certain queries to General Washington, which had been sent to him from Scotland by persons proposing to emigrate to America.—*Sparks.*

able, to every reasonable inquiry, (and this is certainly not only so, but may be highly important and interesting,) I must however rather deal in general than particular observations; as I think you will be able, from the length of your residence in the country, and the extensiveness of your acquaintance with its affairs, to make the necessary applications, and add the proper details. Nor would I choose that my interference in the business should be transmitted, lest, in a malicious world, it might be represented that I was officiously using the arts of seduction to depopulate other countries for the sake of peopling our own.

In the first place it is a point conceded, that America, under an efficient government, will be the most favorable country of any in the world for persons of industry and frugality possessed of a moderate capital to inhabit. It is also believed, that it will not be less advantageous to the happiness of the lowest class of people, because of the equal distribution of property, the great plenty of unoccupied lands, and the facility of procuring the means of subsistence. The scheme of purchasing a good tract of freehold estate, and bringing out a number of able-bodied men, indented for a certain time, appears to be indisputably a rational one.

All the interior arrangements of transferring the property and commencing the establishment, you are as well acquainted with as I can possibly be. It might be considered as a point of more difficulty to decide upon the place, which should be most proper for a settlement. Although I believe that

emigrants from other countries to this, who shall be well-disposed, and conduct themselves properly, would be treated with equal friendship and kindness in all parts of it; yet, in the old settled States, land is so much occupied, and the value so much enhanced by the contiguous cultivation, that the price would, in general, be an objection. The land in [the] western country, or that on the Ohio, like all others, has its *advantages and disadvantages.* The neighborhood of the savages, and the difficulty of transportation, were the great objections. The danger of the first will soon cease by the strong establishments now taking place; the inconveniences of the second will be, in a great degree, remedied by opening the internal navigation. No colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices, as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum. Information, property, and strength, will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally, and that there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community.

If I was a young man, just preparing to begin the world, or if advanced in life, and had a family to make a provision for, I know of no country where I should rather fix my habitation than in some part of that region, for which the writer of the queries seems to have a predilection. He might be informed that his namesake and distant relation, General St. Clair, is not only in high repute, but that he is governor of all the territory westward of the Ohio, and that there is a gentleman (to wit, Mr.

Joel Barlow) gone from New York by the last French packet, who will be in London in the course of this year, and who is authorized to dispose of a very large body of land in that country. The author of the queries may then be referred to the "*Information for those who wish to remove to America,*" and published in Europe in the year 1784, by the great philosopher Dr. Franklin. Short as it is, it contains almost every thing, that needs to be known on the subject of migrating to this country. You may find that excellent little treatise in "*Carey's American Museum,*" for September, 1787. It is worthy of being republished in Scotland, and every other part of Europe.

As to the European publications respecting the United States, they are commonly very defective. The Abbé Raynal is quite erroneous. Guthrie, though somewhat better informed, is not absolutely correct. There is now an *American Geography* preparing for the press by a Mr. Morse of New Haven in Connecticut, which, from the pains the author has taken in travelling through the States, and acquiring information from the principal characters in each, will probably be much more exact and useful. Of books at present existing, Mr. Jefferson's "*Notes on Virginia*" will give the best idea of this part of the continent to a foreigner; and the "*American Farmer's Letters,*" written by Mr. Crevecœur (commonly called Mr. St. John), the French consul in New York, who actually resided twenty years as a farmer in that State, will afford a great deal of profitable and amu-

sive information, respecting the private life of the Americans, as well as the progress of agriculture, manufactures, and arts, in their country. Perhaps the picture he gives, though founded on fact, is in some instances embellished with rather too flattering circumstances. I am, &c.

6. Education

TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT

PHILADELPHIA, 28 January, 1795.

GENTLEMEN,

A plan for the establishment of an university in the Federal City has frequently been the subject of conversation; but, in what manner it is proposed to commence this important institution, on how extensive a scale, the means by which it is to be effected, how it is to be supported, or what progress is made in it, are matters altogether unknown to me.

It has always been a source of serious reflection and sincere regret with me, that the youth of the United States should be sent to foreign countries for the purpose of education. Although there are doubtless many, under these circumstances, who escape the danger of contracting principles unfavorable to republican government, yet we ought to deprecate the hazard attending ardent and susceptible minds, from being too strongly and too early prepossessed in favor of other political systems, before they are capable of appreciating their own.

For this reason I have greatly wished to see a plan adopted, by which the arts, sciences, and belles-lettres could be taught in their *fullest* extent, thereby embracing *all* the advantages of European tuition, with the means of acquiring the liberal knowledge, which is necessary to qualify our citizens for the exigencies of public as well as private life; and (which with me is a consideration of great magnitude) by assembling the youth from the different parts of this rising republic, contributing from their intercourse and interchange of information to the removal of prejudices, which might perhaps sometimes arise from local circumstances.

The Federal City, from its centrality and the advantages, which in other respects it must have over any other place in the United States, ought to be preferred, as a proper site for such an university. And if a plan can be adopted upon a scale as *extensive* as I have described, and the execution of it should commence under favorable auspices in a reasonable time, with a fair prospect of success, I will grant in perpetuity fifty shares in the navigation of Potomac River towards the endowment of it. * * *[1]

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

PHILADELPHIA, 15 March, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

I received your letter of the 23d ultimo; but not at so early a period as might have been expected

[1] These shares of the Potomac Company never became productive.

from the date of it. My mind has always been more disposed to apply the shares in the inland navigation of Potomac and James Rivers, which were left to my disposal by the legislature of Virginia, towards the endowment of an university in the United States, than to any other object it had contemplated. In pursuance of this idea, and understanding that other means are in embryo for establishing so useful a seminary in the Federal City, I did, on the 28th of January last, announce to the commissioners thereof my intention of vesting in perpetuity the fifty shares I hold under that act in the navigation of Potomac, as an additional mean of carrying the plan into effect, provided it should be adopted upon a scale so liberal as to extend to and embrace a *complete* system of education.

I had little hesitation in giving the Federal City a preference of all other places for the institution, for the following reasons. 1st, on account of its being the permanent seat of the government of this Union, and where the laws and policy of it must be better understood than in any local part thereof. 2d, because of its centrality. 3d, because one half (or near it) of the District of Columbia is within the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the whole of the State not inconvenient thereto. 4th, because, as a *part* of the endowment, it would be useful, but *alone* would be inadequate to the end. 5th, because many advantages, I conceive, would result from the jurisdiction, which the general government will have over it, which no other spot would possess.

And, lastly, as this seminary is contemplated for the completion of education and study of the sciences, (not for boys in their rudiments,) it will afford the students an opportunity of attending the debates in Congress, and thereby becoming more liberally and better acquainted with the principles of law and government.

My judgment and my wishes point equally strong to the application of the James River shares to the same object at the same place; but, considering the source from whence they were derived, I have, in a letter I am writing to the executive of Virginia on this subject, left the application of them to a seminary *within the State*, to be located by the legislature.

Hence you will perceive, that I have in a degree anticipated your proposition.[1] I was restrained from going the whole length of the suggestion by the following considerations. 1st, I did not know to what extent or when any plan would be so matured for the establishment of an university, as would enable any assurances to be given to the application of M. D'Ivernois. 2d, the propriety of transplanting the professors *in a body* might be questioned for several reasons; among others, because they might not be all good characters, nor all sufficiently acquainted with our language. And again, having been at variance with the levelling party of their own country, the measure might be considered as an aristocratical movement by more

[1] Jefferson had written concerning several Geneva professors who thought of coming to America.

than those, who, without any just cause that I can discover, are continually sounding the bell of aristocracy. And, 3d, because it might preclude some of the first professors in other countries from a participation, among whom some of the most celebrated characters in Scotland, in this line, might be obtained.

Something, but of what nature I am unable to inform you, has been written by Mr. Adams to M. D'Ivernois. Never having viewed my intended donation as more than a part of the means, that were to set this establishment afloat, I did not incline to go too far in the encouragement of professors, before the plan should assume a more formal shape, much less to induce an entire college to migrate. The enclosed is the answer I have received from the commissioners; from which, and the ideas I have here expressed, you will be enabled to decide on the best communication to be made to M. D'Ivernois.

My letter to the commissioners has bound me to the fulfilment of what is therein engaged; and if the legislature of Virginia, in considering the subject, should view it in the same light I do, the James River shares will be added thereto; for I think one good institution of this sort is to be preferred to two imperfect ones, which, without other aid than the shares in *both* navigations, is more likely to fall through, than to succeed upon the plan I contemplate; which, in a few words, is to supersede the necessity of sending the youth of this country abroad for the purpose of education,

(where too often principles and habits unfriendly to republican government are imbibed, and not easily discarded,) by instituting such an one of our own, as will answer the end, and associating them in the same seminary, will contribute to wear off those prejudices and unreasonable jealousies, which prevent or weaken friendships and impair the harmony of the Union. With very great esteem, I am, &c.

P. S. Mr. Adams *laid* before me the communications of M. D'Ivernois; but I said nothing to him of my intended donation towards the establishment of an university in the Federal District. My wishes would be to fix this on the Virginia side of the Potomac River; but this would not embrace or accord with those other means, which are proposed for the establishment.

TO ROBERT BROOKE, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

PHILADELPHIA, 16 March, 1795.

SIR,

Ever since the General Assembly of Virginia were pleased to submit to my disposal fifty shares in the Potomac, and one hundred in the James River Company, it has been my anxious desire to appropriate them to an object most worthy of public regard.

It is with indescribable regret, that I have seen the youth of the United States migrating to foreign countries, in order to acquire the higher branches of erudition, and to obtain a knowledge of the

sciences. Although it would be injustice to many to pronounce the certainty of their imbibing maxims not congenial with republicanism, it must nevertheless be admitted, that a serious danger is encountered by sending abroad among other political systems those, who have not well learned the value of their own.

The time is therefore come, when a plan of universal education ought to be adopted in the United States. Not only do the exigencies of public and private life demand it, but, if it should ever be apprehended, that prejudice would be entertained in one part of the Union against another, an efficacious remedy will be, to assemble the youth of every part under such circumstances as will, by the freedom of intercourse and collision of sentiment, give to their minds the direction of truth, philanthropy, and mutual conciliation.

It has been represented, that a university corresponding with these ideas is contemplated to be built in the Federal City, and that it will receive considerable endowments. This position is so eligible from its centrality, so convenient to Virginia, by whose legislature the shares were granted and in which part of the Federal District stands, and combines so many other conveniences, that I have determined to vest the Potomac shares in that university.

Presuming it to be more agreeable to the General Assembly of Virginia, that the shares in the James River Company should be reserved for a similar object in some part of that State, I intend

to allot them for a seminary to be erected at such place as they shall deem most proper. I am disposed to believe, that a seminary of learning upon an enlarged plan, but yet not coming up to the full idea of an university, is an institution to be preferred for the position which is to be chosen. The students who wish to pursue the whole range of science, may pass with advantage from the seminary to the university, and the former by a due relation may be rendered co-operative with the latter.

I cannot however dissemble my opinion, that if all the shares were conferred on an university, it would become far more important, than when they are divided; and I have been constrained from concentring them in the same place, merely by my anxiety to reconcile a particular attention to Virginia with a great good, in which she will abundantly share in common with the rest of the United States.

I must beg the favor of your Excellency to lay this letter before that honorable body, at their next session, in order that I may appropriate the James River shares to the place which they may prefer. They will at the same time again accept my acknowledgments for the opportunity, with which they have favored me, of attempting to supply so important a desideratum in the United States as an university adequate to our necessity, and a preparatory seminary. With great consideration and respect, I am, Sir, &c.[1]

[1] This letter was communicated to the General Assembly,

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON

[PRIVATE]

PHILADELPHIA, 1 September, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

About the middle of last week I wrote to you; and that it might escape the eye of the inquisitive (for some of my letters have lately been pried into), I took the liberty of putting it under a cover to Mr. Jay.

Since then, revolving on the paper that was inclosed therein,[1] on the various matters it contained, and of the first expression of the advice or recommendation which was given in it, I have regretted that another subject (which in my estimation is of interesting concern to the well-being of this country) was not touched upon also;—I mean education generally, as one of the surest means of enlightening and giving just ways of thinking to our citizens, but particularly the establishment of a university; where the youth from all parts of the United States might receive the polish of erudition in the arts, sciences, and belles-lettres; and where those who were disposed to run a political course might not only be instructed in the theory and principles, but (this seminary being at the seat of the general government) where the legislature would be in session half the year, and the interests

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which adopted resolutions approving of Washington's design. The shares in the James River Company were given to the Liberty Hall Academy, which was afterward called Washington College, and is now Washington and Lee University.

[1] This refers to one of the drafts of the *Farewell Address*.

and politics of the nation of course would be discussed, they would lay the surest foundation for the practical part also.

But that which would render it of the highest importance, in my opinion, is, that the juvenal period of life, when friendships are formed, and habits established, that will stick by one; the youth or young men from different parts of the United States would be assembled together, and would by degrees discover that there was not that cause for those jealousies and prejudices which one part of the Union had imbibed against another part:—of course, sentiments of more liberality in the general policy of the country would result from it. What but the mixing of people from different parts of the United States during the war rubbed off these impressions? A century, in the ordinary intercourse, would not have accomplished what the seven years' association in arms did; but that ceasing, prejudices are beginning to revive again, and never will be eradicated so effectually by any other means as the intimate intercourse of characters in early life,—who, in all probability, will be at the head of the counsels of this country in a more advanced stage of it.

To show that this is no new idea of mine, I may appeal to my early communications to Congress; and to prove how seriously I have reflected on it since, and how well disposed I have been, and still am, to contribute my aid towards carrying the measure into effect, I inclose you the extract of a letter from me to the governor of Virginia on this

subject, and a copy of the resolves of the legislature of that State in consequence thereof.

I have not the smallest doubt that this donation (when the navigation is in complete operation, which it certainly will be in less than two years), will amount to £1200 to £1500 sterling a year, and become a rapidly increasing fund. The proprietors of the federal city have talked of doing something handsome towards it likewise; and if Congress would appropriate some of the western lands to the same uses, funds sufficient, and of the most permanent and increasing sort, might be so established as to invite the ablest professors in Europe to conduct it.

Let me pray you, therefore to introduce a section in the address expressive of these sentiments, and recommendatory of the measure, without any mention, however, of my proposed contribution to the plan.

Such a section would come in very properly after the one which relates to our religious obligations, or in a preceding part, as one of the recommendatory measures to counteract the evils arising from geographical discriminations. With affectionate regard, I am always.[1]

[1] "Amongst the motives to such an institution [as a national university], the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our countrymen, by the common education of a portion of our youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent union; and a primary object of such an institution should be, the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important,

7. Slavery

TO ROBERT MORRIS

Mount Vernon, 12 April, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I give you the trouble of this letter at the instance of Mr. Dalby of Alexandria, who is called to Philadelphia to attend what he conceives to be a vexatious lawsuit respecting a slave of his, which a society of Quakers in the city, (formed for such purposes,) have attempted to liberate. The merits of this case will no doubt appear upon trial. From Mr. Dalby's state of the matter, it should seem, that this society is not only acting repugnant to justice, so far as its conduct concerns strangers, but in my opinion extremely impoliticly with respect to the State, the city in particular, and without

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and what duty more pressing on its legislature, than to patronize a plan for communicating it to those, who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?"—*Speech to both Houses of Congress*, 7 December, 1796.

"The reason which you assign for giving the rudiments of education to your sons at home is a weighty and conclusive one;—but much will depend upon the qualifications and fitness of the preceptor you employ, to render it more or less beneficial. To a certain point tuition under the eye of Parents or Guardian of youth, is much to be preferred, because the presumption is: that the properties and passions will be watched with more solicitude and attention by them, than by their Tutors:—but when the direction of these are unfolded and can be counteracted by the discipline of Public schools and the precepts of the professors. Especially too when the judgment is beginning to form; when pride becomes a stimulus; and the knowledge of men, as well as of Books are to be learnt, I should give the preference to a public Seminary."—*Washington to William Augustine Washington*, 27 February, 1798.

being able, (but by acts of tyranny and oppression,) to accomplish its own ends. He says the conduct of this society is not sanctioned by law. Had the case been otherwise, whatever my opinion of the law might have been, my respect for the policy of the State would on this occasion have appeared in my silence; because against the penalties of promulgated laws one may guard, but there is no avoiding the snares of individuals, or of private societies. And if the practice of this society, of which Mr. Dalby speaks, is not discountenanced, none of those, whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants, will visit the city if they can possibly avoid it; because by so doing they hazard their property, or they must be at the expense (and this will not always succeed) of providing servants of another description for the trip.

I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting. But when slaves, who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when masters are taken unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other; and when it happens

to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the society, and he loses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in such a case, and not humanity in any, because it introduces more evils than it can cure.[1]

[1] "The benevolence of your heart, my dear Marquis, is so conspicuous upon all occasions, that I never wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country. But I despair of seeing it. Some petitions were presented to the Assembly, at its last session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set them afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected; and that too by legislative authority."—*Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette*, 10 May, 1786.

"I never mean (unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by which slavery in this country may be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees."—*Washington to John Francis Mercer*, 9 September, 1786.

"I must say that I lament the decision of your legislature upon the question of importing slaves after March, 1793. I was in hopes, that motives of policy as well as other good reasons, supported by the direful effects of slavery, which at this moment are presented, would have operated to produce a total prohibition of the importation of slaves, whenever the question came to be agitated in any State, that might be interested in the measure."—*Washington to Charles Pinckney, Governor of South Carolina*, 17 March, 1792.

"ITEM—Upon the decease of my wife it is my will and desire, that all the slaves which I hold in *my own right* shall receive their freedom—To emancipate them during her life, would tho earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties, on account of their intermixture by marriages with the Dower negroes as to excite the most painful sensations—if not disagreeable consequences from the latter while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same pro-

I will make no apology for writing to you on this subject, for, if Mr. Dalby has not misconceived the matter, an evil exists which requires a remedy; if he has, my intentions have been good, though I

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prietor, it not being in my power under the tenure by which the dower Negroes are held to manumit them—And whereas among those who will receive freedom according to this devise there may be some who from old age, or bodily infirmities & others who on account of their infancy, that will be unable to support themselves, it is my will and desire that all who come under the first and second description shall be comfortably clothed and fed by my heirs while they live and that such of the latter discription as have no parents living, or if living are unable, or unwilling to provide for them, shall be bound by the Court until they shall arrive at the age of twenty five years, and in cases where no record can be produced whereby their ages can be ascertained, the Judgment of the Court upon it's own view of the subject shall be adequate and final.—The negroes thus bound are (by their masters and mistresses) to be taught to read and write and to be brought up to some useful occupation, agreeably to the laws of the commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of orphans and other poor children—and I do hereby expressly forbid the sale or transportation out of the said Commonwealth of any Slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence, whatsoever—and I do moreover most positively, and most solemnly enjoin it upon my Executors hereafter named, or the survivors of them to see that this clause respecting slaves and every part thereof be religiously fulfilled at the Epoch at which it is directed to take place without evasion neglect or delay after the crops which may then be on the ground are harvested, particularly as it respects the aged and infirm, seeing that a regular and permanent fund be established for their support so long as there are subjects requiring it, not trusting to the uncertain provisions to be made by individuals.—And to my mulatto man, William (calling himself William Lee) I give immediate freedom or if he should prefer it (on account of the accidents which have befallen him and which have rendered him incapable of walking or of any active employment) to remain in the situation he now is, it shall be optional in him to do so—In either case however I allow him an annuity of thirty dollars during his natural life which shall be independent of the victuals and

may have been too precipitate in this address. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good and kind wish for Mrs. Morris and your family, and I am, &c.

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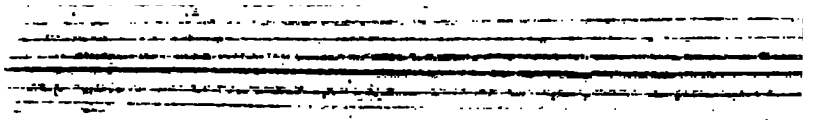
cloaths he has been accustomed to receive; if he *chuses* the last alternative, but in full with his freedom, if he prefers the first, and this I give him as a testimony of my sense of his attachment to me and for his faithful services during the Revolutionary War."—From *The Will of George Washington*, 9 July, 1799.



VI

The Farewell Address

In devising plans Washington was more decided than Ching Shing or Woo Kwang; in winning a country he was braver than Tsau Tsau or Ling Pi. Wielding his four-footed falchion, he extended the frontiers and refused to accept the Royal Dignity. The sentiments of the Three Dynasties have reappeared in him. Can any man of ancient or modern times fail to pronounce Washington peerless?

INSCRIPTION ON THE STONE PLACED BY CHINA IN THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT.

taken, without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation, which binds a dutiful citizen to his country—and that, in withdrawing the tender of service which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire.—I constantly hoped, that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives, which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement, from which I had been reluctantly drawn.—The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign Nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.—

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perserve the national dignity. The prominent part which he took in the formation and adoption of the Constitution, combined with his previous services, made him the natural choice of the people for the Presidency. When the matter was broached to him, however, he recurred immediately to the declaration that he had made upon the resignation of his military command, and asked if he might not be charged with insincerity if he again entered public life. He was convinced by the arguments of Hamilton, Madison, and others that circum-

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty, or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

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stances which could not have been foreseen had so radically changed the situation that there was no basis for such a charge. He reluctantly yielded to their importunities, and accepted the Presidency with the idea of retiring at the end of two years. But when that time arrived, much remained to be done. At the end of the third year, he had but one more year to serve, and it seemed unwise to disturb the normal course of things. But as his term drew to a close he made up his mind to decline a re-election.

A conversation held with Jefferson on February 29, 1792, seems to be the first definite expression of his determination, but soon after it was communicated to Hamilton, Knox, Madison, and Randolph. On May 5, 1792, he asked Madison to advise him as to the best time and manner for making public his intention, and this request was repeated in a letter of May 20, 1792 (*Writings*, xii., 123), in which he said: "Under these impressions then, permit me to reiterate the request I made to you at our last meeting—namely, to think of the proper time, and the best mode of announcing the intention; and that you would prepare the latter.— * * * I would fain carry my request to you farther than is asked above, although I am sensible that your compliance with it must add to your trouble; but as the recess [of Congress] may afford you leizure, and I flatter myself you have dispositions to oblige me, I will, without apology, desire (if the measure in itself should strike you as proper, and likely to produce public good, or private honor) that you would turn your thoughts to a valedictory address from me to the public, expressing in plain and modest terms, that having been honored with the Presidential chair, and to the best of my abilities contributed to the organization and administration of the government—that having arrived at a period of life when the private walks of it, in the shade of retirement, becomes necessary and will be most pleasing to me;—and the

The impressions, with which I first undertook the arduous trust, were explained on the proper occasion.—In the discharge of this trust, I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government, the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable.—Not unconscious, in

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spirit of the government may render a rotation in the elective officers of it more congenial with their ideas of liberty and safety, that I take my leave of them as a public man; and in bidding them adieu (retaining no other concern than such as will arise from fervent wishes for the prosperity of my Country) I take the liberty at my departure from civil, as I formerly did at my military exit to invoke a continuation of the blessings of Providence upon it, and upon all those who are the supporters of its interests, and the promoters of harmony, order and good government. That to impress these things it might, among other things be observed, that we are *all* the children of the same country—a country great and rich in itself—capable and promising to be, as prosperous and as happy as any the annals of history have ever brought to our view—That our interest, however diversified in local and smaller matters, is the same in all the great and essential concerns of the Nation.—That the extent of our Country—the diversity of our climate and soil—and the various productions of the States consequent of both, are such as to make one part not only convenient, but perhaps indispensably necessary to the other part;—and may render the whole (at no distant period) one of the most independent in the world.—That the established government being the work of our own hands, with the seeds of amendment engrafted in the Constitution, may by wisdom, good dispositions, and mutual allowances; aided by experience, bring it as near to perfection as any human institution ever approximated; and therefore, the only strife among us ought to be, who should be foremost in facilitating and finally accomplishing such great and desirable objects; by giving every possible support, and cement to the Union.—That however necessary it may be to keep a watchful eye over public servants, and public measures, yet there ought to be limits to it: for suspicions unfounded, and jealousies too lively, are irritating to honest feeling; and often-

the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome.—Satisfied, that, if any cir-

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times are productive of more evil than good. To enumerate the various subjects which might be introduced into such an address would require thought; and to mention them to you would be unnecessary, as your own judgment will comprehend *all* that will be proper; whether to touch, specifically, any of the exceptionable parts of the Constitution may be doubted.—All I shall add therefore at present, is, to beg the favor of you to consider—1st, the propriety of such an address.—2d, if approved, the several matters which ought to be contained in it—and 3d, the time it should appear: that is, whether at the declaration of my intention to withdraw from the service of the public—or let it be the closing act of my administration—which will end with the next session of Congress (the probability being that that body will continue sitting until March,) when the House of Representatives will also dissolve."

In accordance with this request, Madison drafted a valedictory address which followed very closely the suggestions contained in Washington's letter. (For the text of Madison's draft, see *The Writings of Washington,* Ford's edition, xiii., 194.) In the meantime, however, those to whom Washington made known his intention of retiring strongly protested against it. Madison urged that "his retiring at the present juncture might have effects that ought not to be hazarded." Jefferson wrote, "The confidence of the whole Union is centred in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument, which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter into violence or secession. North and South will hang together, if they have you to hang on." Hamilton assured him "that your declining would be to be deplored as the greatest evil that could befall the country at the present juncture, and as critically hazardous to your own reputation; that your continuance will be justified in the mind of every friend to his country by the evident necessity for it." Influenced by

cumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment, which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my

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these protests and impelled also perhaps by a natural desire to carry more nearly to completion the work that he had begun, Washington yielded, and accepted a re-election, in the hope however that after a year or two he might retire.

At the end of his second term Washington was again urged to continue in office, but he now refused with such decision as to make it clear that he could not be moved. As the time for his retirement approached, he recurred to his project of issuing a valedictory address. Madison, whose assistance had been sought in the preparation of such a document in 1792, had gone over to the opposition party, and the President now turned to Hamilton. He desired if possible that the new address might contain a considerable quotation from the former one. "My reasons for it are," he wrote, "that as it is not only a fact that such an address was written, and on the point of being published, *but known also to one or two* of those characters [Jefferson and Madison], who are now strongest and foremost in the opposition to the government, and consequently to the person administering of it contrary to their views, the promulgation thereof, as an evidence that it was much against my inclination that I continued in office, will cause it more readily to be believed, that I could have no view in extending the powers of the Executive beyond the limits prescribed by the Constitution; and will serve to lessen, in the public estimation, the pretensions of that party to the patriotic zeal and watchfulness, on which they endeavor to build their own consequence, at the expense of others who have differed from them in sentiment. And besides, it may contribute to blunt, if it does not turn aside, some of the shafts which, it may be presumed, will be aimed at my annunciation of this event; among which, conviction of fallen popularity, and despair of being re-elected, will be levelled at me with dexterity and keenness." (*Washington to Hamilton*, 15 May, 1796.)

feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I owe to my beloved country,—for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the stedfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faith-

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The idea of embodying the old address in the new one did not appeal to Hamilton. "There seems to me to be a certain awkwardness in the thing," he wrote, "and it seems to imply that there is a doubt whether the assurance without the evidence would be believed." Accordingly, with Washington's draft before him, he proceeded to re-cast the paper, and the revised copy was sent to Washington, July 30, 1796. On August 10 Hamilton submitted another draft of which Washington wrote that he preferred "it greatly to the other draughts, being more copious on material points, more dignified on the whole, and with less egotism." (For this draft, see *The Writings of Washington*, Ford's edition, xiii., 277. For Hamilton's final revision, see his *Works*, Lodge's edition, vii., 143.) Certain changes and additions were suggested by Washington, and after a final revision by the President it was published to the world as his *Farewell Address to the People of the United States*. From this account it is evident that the thought of publishing such an address originated with Washington, and that most of the ideas finally embodied in it were suggested by him, but that the language in which they are couched is chiefly Hamilton's.

The *Farewell Address* was first published in *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), for September 19, 1796, and it is this newspaper version which was printed by Sparks in his edition of *The Writings of Washington*, and which has usually served as the basis of other reprints of the document. It was reproduced from Washington's own manuscript by James Lenox in 1850. This imprint, which shows Washington's revisions and corrections, was followed by Ford in his edition of *The Writings of Washington*. The present reprint follows Ford except that the parts stricken out by Washington are here omitted. The original manuscript of the *Address* is preserved in the Lenox Library, New York.

which you so highly prize.—But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes, and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth;—as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness;—that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immoveable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our Country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest.—Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections.—The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations.—With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits, and

political Principles.—You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together.—The Independence and Liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts—of common dangers, sufferings and successes.—

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your Interest.—Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the Union of the whole.

The *North* in an unrestrained intercourse with the *South,* protected by the equal Laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise— and precious materials of manufacturing industry.—The *South* in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the *North,* sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the *North,* it finds its particular navigation envigorated;—and, while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength to which itself is unequally adapted.—The *East,* in a like intercourse with the *West,* already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications, by land and water, will more and more find, a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home.—The *West*

derives from the *East* supplies requisite to its growth and comfort,—and what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the *secure* enjoyment of indispensable *outlets* for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest, as *one Nation*.—Any other tenure by which the *West* can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connexion with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While then every part of our Country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in Union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts, greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their Peace by foreign Nations; and, what is of inestimable value! they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighbouring countries, not tied together by the same government; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce; but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter.—Hence likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown Military establishments, which under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty: In this sense it is, that your Union ought to

be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind,—and exhibit the continuance of the UNION as a primary object of Patriotic desire.—Is there a doubt, whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? —Let experience solve it.—To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal.—We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. 'T is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to Union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.—

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by *Geographical* discriminations—*Northern* and *Southern*—*Atlantic* and *Western;* whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of Party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts.—You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings

which spring from these misrepresentations;—They tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection.—The inhabitants of our Western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head.—They have seen, in the negotiation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the Treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the General Government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in regard to the MISSISSIPPI.—They have been witnesses to the formation of two Treaties, that with G. Britain, and that with Spain, which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our Foreign Relations, towards confirming their prosperity.—Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the UNION by which they were procured?—Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their Brethren, and connect them with Aliens?—

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a Government for the whole is indispensable.—No alliances however strict between the parts can be an adequate substitute.—They must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced.—Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a Constitution of Government, better calculated than your former

for an intimate Union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns.—This government, the offspring of our own choice uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support.—Respect for its authority, compliance with its Laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty.—The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government.—But the Constitution which at any time exists, 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all.—The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish Government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government.

All obstructions to the execution of the Laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, controul, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency.—They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force—to put, in the place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party;—often a small but artful and enterprizing minority of the community;—and, ac-

cording to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.—However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the Power of the People and to usurp for themselves the reins of Government; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.—

Towards the preservation of your Government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts.—One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown.—In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments, as of other human institutions—that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing Constitution of a Country —that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion exposes to perpetual change,

from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion: —and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a Government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of Liberty is indispensable.—Liberty itself will find in such a Government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest Guardian.—It is indeed little else than a name, where the Government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the Society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of Parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on Geographical discriminations.—Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party, generally.

This Spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind.—It exists under different shapes in all Governments, more or less stifled, controuled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.—

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormi-

ties, is itself a frightful despotism.—But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism.—The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an Individual: and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind, (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of Party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise People to discourage and restrain it.—

It serves always to distract the Public Councils, and enfeeble the Public administration.—It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. —It opens the doors to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the Government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country, are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the Administration of the Government, and serve to keep alive the Spirit of Liberty.—This within certain limits is probably true—and in Governments of a Monarchical cast, Patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with

favour, upon the spirit of party.—But in those of the popular character, in Governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged.—From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose,—and there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it.—A fire not to be quenched; it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.—

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres; avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another.—The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. —A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position.—The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the Guardian of the Public Weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes.—To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If in the opinion of the People, the distribu-

tion or modification of the Constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates.—But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.—The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.—

Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports.—In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens.—The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them.—A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity.—Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion.—Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure—reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.—

'T is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.—The

rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of Free Government.—Who that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?—

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge.—In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.—

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit.—One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible:—avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it—avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of Peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthen which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your Representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should coöperate.—To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there must be Revenue—that to have Revenue there must be taxes—that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant—that the intrinsic embarrassment inseparable from the

selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties) ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the Government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining Revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.—

Observe good faith and justice towards all Nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all.—Religion and Morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it?—It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a People always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.—Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages, which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be, that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a Nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature.—Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded; and that in place of them just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated.—The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is

a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.—Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.—Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed and bloody contests.—The Nation prompted by ill-will and resentment sometimes impels to War the Government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. —The Government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject;—at other times, it makes the animosity of the Nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives.—The peace often, sometimes perhaps the Liberty, of Nations has been the victim.—

So likewise a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils.—Sympathy for the favourite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification: It leads also to concessions to the favourite Nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting

jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (who devote themselves to the favourite Nation) facility to betray, or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity:—gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption or infatuation.—

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent Patriot.—How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens, the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government.—But that jealousy to be useful must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defence against it.—Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of an-

other, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other.—Real Patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favourite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.—

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *Political* connection as possible.—So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith.—Here let us stop.—

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation.—Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns.—Hence therefore it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships, or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.—If we remain one People, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected.—When belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we

may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by our justice shall counsel.—

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?—Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground?—Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humour, or caprice?—

'T is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world;—so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it—for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements, (I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy).—I repeat it therefore let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense.—But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.—

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectably defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.—

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest.—But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand:—neither seeking nor granting exclusive favours or preferences;—consulting the natural course of things;—diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing;—establishing with Powers so disposed—in order to give trade a stable

course, to define the rights of our Merchants, and to enable the Government to support them—conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit; but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that 't is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another,—that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character—that by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favours and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more.—There can be no greater error than to expect, or calculate upon real favours from Nation to Nation.—'T is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my Countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression, I could wish,—that they will controul the usual current of the passions, or prevent our Nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of Nations.—But if I may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit; some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism, this hope will be a f"

recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.—

How far in the discharge of my official duties, I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public Records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to You, and to the World.—To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting War in Europe, my Proclamation of the 22d of April 1793 is the index to my plan.[1]—Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of Your Representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me:—uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest, to take a Neutral position.—Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it, with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.—

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe, that according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the Belligerent Powers, has been virtually admitted by all.—

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be

[1] See page 408.

inferred, without any thing more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every Nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of Peace and Amity towards other Nations.—

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience.—With me, a predominant motive has been to endeavour to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency, which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my Administration, I am unconscious of intentional error —I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors.—Whatever they may be I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend.—I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service, with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man, who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations;—I anticipate with pleasing expectation that

retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good Laws under a free Government,—the ever favourite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labours, and dangers.

Gº Washington.

United States,
19th *September*, 1796

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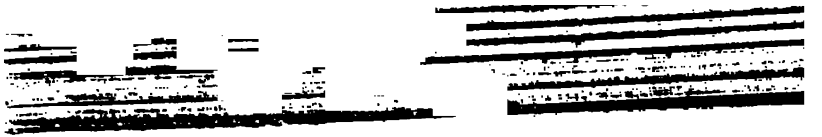

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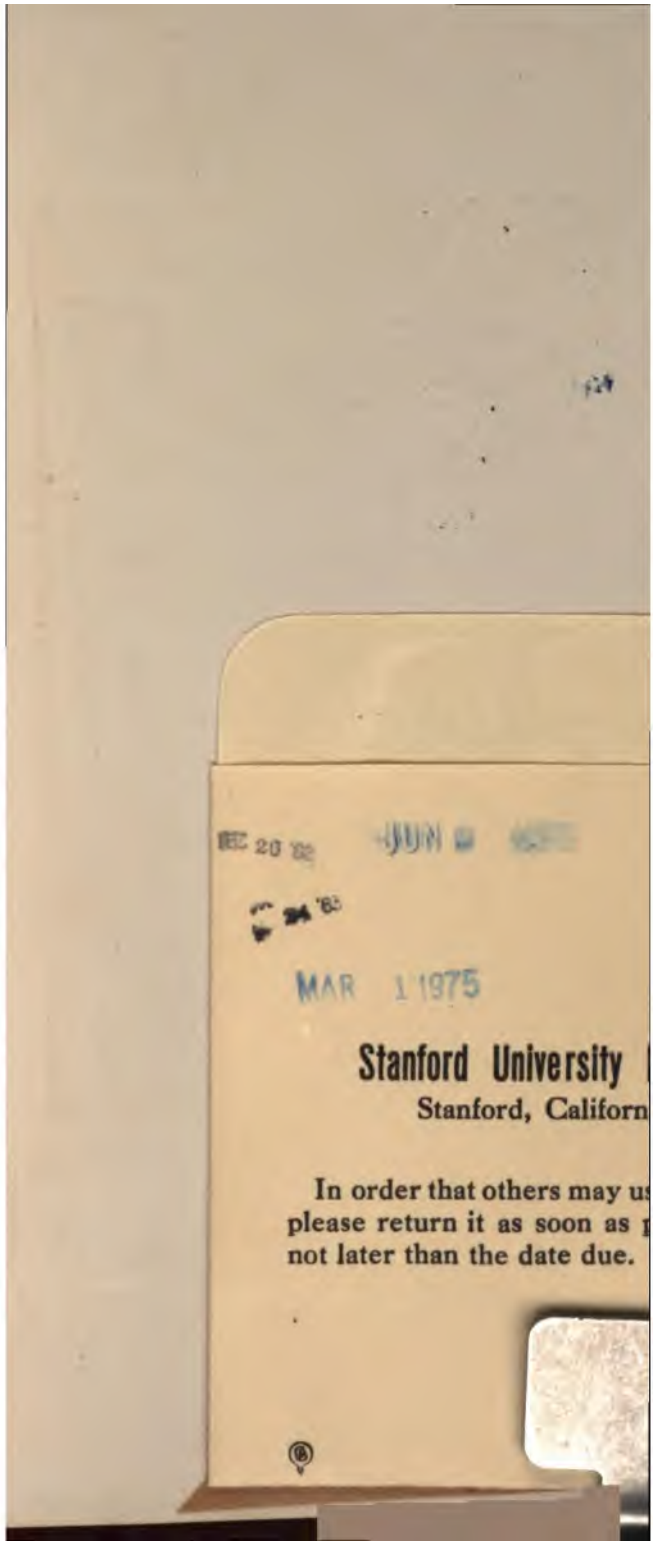
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